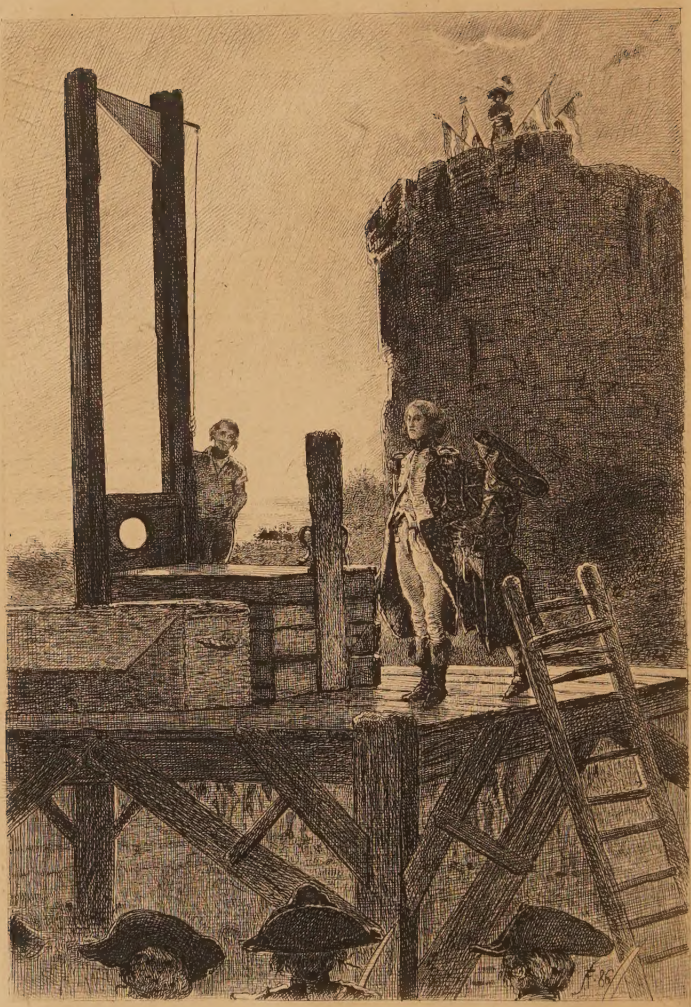
450

THE COMPANY OF JEHU.

VOLUME I.



THE WORKS OF
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

The Company of Jehu

COLONIAL PRESS COMPANY
BOSTON and NEW YORK

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By Estes & Lauriat

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THE COMPANY OF JEHU.

A WORD TO THE READER.

It is about a year since my old friend, Jules Simon, author of "Devoir" asked me to write him a novel for the "Journal pour Tous." I told him the subject of one which I had in my mind. It suited him; and we came to an agreement on the spot.

The action took place from 1791 to 1793, and the first chapter opened at Varennes the evening of the king's arrest.

I told Jules Simon that however impatient the "Journal" might be, I must have a fortnight before I began the book. I wanted to go to Varennes; I had never been to Varennes.

Now there is one thing I cannot do; I cannot write a book or a drama about localities I have never seen. To write "Christine" I went to Fontainebleau; to write "Henri III." I went to Blois; to write "Les Trois Mousquetaires" I went to Béthune and Boulogne; to write "Monte-Cristo" I returned to the Catalans and the Château d'If; to write "Isaac Laquedem" I revisited Rome; and I did, most certainly, spend more time in studying Jerusalem and Corinth from a distance than it would have taken me to go there.

That gives such a character of truth to what I write that the personages I plant in certain places seem to grow

there; and some people have been led to think they have actually existed; in fact, there are persons who say they have known them. With regard to this, I shall tell you a little thing in confidence, my dear readers, only don't repeat it. I do not wish to injure worthy family-men who live by the little industry, but if you go to Marseille they will show you Morel's house on the Cours, Mercédès' house at the Catalans, and the dungeons of Dantès and Faria at the Château d'If.

When I brought out "Monte-Cristo" at the Théâtre-Historique I wrote to Marseille for a drawing of the Château d'If, which they sent me. I wanted it for the scene-painter. The artist to whom I had written not only sent me the sketch, but he did more than I had ventured to ask of him; he wrote underneath it: "View of the Château d'If on the side from which Dantès was flung."

I have heard since that a worthy fellow, a guide attached to the Château d'If, sells pens of fish-bones made by the Abbé Faria himself. Unluckily, Dantès and the Abbé Faria never existed except in my imagination; consequently, Dantès could not have been flung from the top to the bottom of the Château d'If, neither could the Abbé Faria have made pens. But that is what it is to visit localities.

So I wanted to go to Varennes before beginning my novel, the first scene of which was to be in Varennes. Besides, historically Varennes puzzled me; the more I read the historical accounts of Varennes the less I could understand, topographically, the arrest of the king. Accordingly I proposed to my young friend Paul Bocage to go with me to Varennes. I was certain he would accept. The mere proposal of such a trip to that charming and picturesque imagination was enough to make its owner bound from his chair to the railroad.

We took the railroad to Châlons. At Châlons we bargained with a stable-keeper, who, for a consideration of ten francs a day lent us a horse and a carry-all. We were gone

seven days, — three days in going from Châlons to Varennes, three days in returning from Varennes to Châlons, and one day to make all our local researches on the spot.

I discovered, with a satisfaction you will readily understand, that not a single historian had been historical, and, with a satisfaction greater still, that M. Thiers had been the least historical of all of them. I suspected that already, but I was not certain. The only writer who had been accurate, with absolute accuracy, was Victor Hugo in his book called "The Rhine." It is true that Victor Hugo is a poet, and not an historian. What historians poets might be if they would only consent to make themselves historians! One day Lamartine asked me to what I attributed the immense success of his "Histoire des Girondins." "To the fact that you rose to the level of the novel," I replied. He reflected a long time and ended, I believe, in being of my opinion.

I stayed one day at Varennes, and visited all the localities necessary for my story, which was to be called "René d'Argonne." Then I came away. My son was passing the summer in his country-house at Sainte-Assise, near Melun. My room awaited me. I resolved to go and write my novel there.

I don't know two natures more unlike than Alexandre's and mine, which, nevertheless, go perfectly together. He and I certainly have many happy hours when we are apart, but I believe we have none happier than those we spend together.

Well, at the end of three or four days I was just where I was at first, — trying to begin my "René d'Argonne," taking up the pen, and immediately laying it down again. It would n't go. I consoled myself by telling stories. It so happened that I told one which Nodier had told me. It was about four young men belonging to the Company of Jehu, who were executed at Bourg in Bresse under the most dramatic circumstances. One of these four young men, the one who had most difficulty in dying, or rather the one they

had the most difficulty in killing, was nineteen and a half years old.

Alexandre listened to my tale with much attention. When I had finished he said: —

"Do you know what I should do if I were you?"

"What?"

"I should let your 'René d'Argonne,' which doesn't crystallize, go, and I should write 'The Company of Jehu' instead."

"But I have got the other in my head; it is almost finished."

"It will never be finished, if it is n't finished now."

"Perhaps you are right; but I shall lose six months in getting to where I am now."

"Pooh! in three days you will have written half a volume."

"Then you must help me."

"You are too grasping! I am busy with my 'Question d'argent.'"

"Well, I don't know but what you're right. Wait a minute."

"I am waiting."

"Have you Nodier's 'Souvenirs de la Révolution'?"

"I have all Nodier's works."

"Then go and get me his 'Souvenirs de la Révolution.' I think he has written two or three pages about Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert."

"They will say you have plagiarized from Nodier."

"Oh, he loved me too well in his lifetime not to give me whatever I take from him after death. Go and get the book."

Alexandre fetched it. I turned over three or four pages and found what I wanted. A little of Nodier, my dear readers, will do you no harm; this is what he says: —

The highwaymen who robbed the diligences, as stated in the article on Amiet from which I have just quoted, were named Leprêtre, Hyvert, Guyon, and Amiet.

Leprêtre was forty-eight years old. He was a former captain of dragoons, a knight of Saint-Louis, of a noble countenance, a fine carriage, and great elegance of manner. Guyon and Amiet have never been known by their real names. They were light-hearted young fellows, between twenty and thirty years of age, bound to each other by some mutual responsibility, which might be that of a bad action or of some more delicate and generous motive, possibly the fear of compromising their family name. Nothing more than this has ever been known of Guyon and Amiet. The latter had a sinister countenance, and he may owe the bad reputation his biographers have given him to the wickedness of his face. Hyvert was the son of a rich merchant in Lyon, who offered the sheriff in whose charge he was, sixty thousand francs to allow him to escape. He was the Paris and the Achilles of the band. His figure was of medium height but well set-up, his bearing graceful, animated, and refined. His eyes were never without an eager glance, nor his lips without a smile. He had one of those countenances which present an inexpressible mingling of sweetness and strength, tenderness and energy, and are never forgotten. When he gave himself up to the eloquent petulance of his inspirations he rose to enthusiasm. His conversation showed the rudiments, at least, of a fine education; and great natural intelligence. The thing that was distressing about him was a tone of heedless gayety, which contrasted horribly with his position. In other respects every one agreed that he was kind, generous, humane, and easily managed by feeble persons; while against the strong he liked to exhibit a vigor that was really athletic, though his rather effeminate features gave little indication of strength. He boasted of never wanting money, and of never having made an enemy. That was his sole answer to the charge of robbery and murder. He was twenty-two years old.

These four men were accused of attacking a diligence which carried forty thousand francs of government money. The deed was done in broad day, almost courteously, and the occupants of the coach, who were not meddled with, cared little about it. But it so happened that a boy, only ten years old, with heedless bravery, snatched the pistol of the conductor and fired it into the midst of the assailants. As that pacific weapon was only loaded with powder, no harm was done; but the persons in the coach had a great and natural fear of reprisals. The boy's mother was seized with so dreadful a nervous attack that anxiety on her account diverted the attention of all, and particularly that of the brigands. One of them

sprang to her side and reassured her in a manner that was almost affectionate, praising the precocious courage of her son, and offering smelling-salts and perfumes, with which these gentry were usually well supplied for their own use. The lady recovered; and her travelling companions noticed that in this moment of excitement the robber's mask fell off; but they did not see his face.

The police of those days, being limited to mere observation, were unable even to check the attacks of these banditti; and yet they did not lack means to get upon their traces. Appointments were made openly at the cafés; narratives were there told of deeds to which the penalty of death was attached. This shows the condition of public opinion on the subject. These men of blood and terror appeared in society in the evening and talked of their nocturnal expeditions as though they were parties of pleasure. Leprêtre, Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert were arraigned before the criminal court of a neighboring department. No one was the worse for the attack on the coach except the Treasury, and nobody cared for that, for no one any longer knew to whom it belonged. Moreover, no one had recognized the assailants, unless it were the lady, and she took very good care not to do so. The prisoners were therefore unanimously acquitted.

Still the evidence was so strong against them that the ministry felt obliged to reopen the case. The verdict was broken; but such was the uncertainty of power at that time, that the government was almost afraid to punish excesses which might, on the morrow, be thought great deeds. The accused were sent for their second trial to the court at Bourg, a town which contained a number of their friends and relatives, their abettors and accomplices. The ministry thought it satisfied the demands of one party by returning the assailants to the law, while it did not displease the other side by sending them for trial where they would almost infallibly be acquitted. The entrance of these men into the prison at Bourg was almost a triumph.

The case began again; at first with the same results. The four prisoners were sheltered by an alibi, which was false, but signed by at least a hundred signatures, and it could easily have had ten thousand. All preconceived opinions must yield in presence of such testimony. The acquittal seemed certain, when the judge put a question, perhaps unconsciously insidious, which changed the whole face of things.

"Madame," he said, to the lady who had been so kindly assisted by one of the robbers, "which one of these men was it who paid you those attentions?"

This unexpected form of inquiry upset her ideas. It is possible that she thought the guilt proved and saw a means of modifying the sentence of the man who interested her.

"That one," she replied, pointing to Leprêtre.

The four prisoners, who were all included in the one alibi, fell by this one stroke under the axe of the executioner. They rose and bowed to the lady, smiling.

"Ha, captain," cried Hyvert, falling back on his bench with a shout of laughter, "that will teach you to play the gallant!"

I have heard that the unhappy lady died of grief not long after.

The usual appeal was taken, but this time there was little hope in it. The Revolutionary party, which Napoleon was destined to crush a month later, was now in the ascendant. That of the Counter-Revolution was disgraced by odious excesses. Examples were wanted; they were even reckoned on; for governments are like men, the weakest are often the most severe. The Companies of Jehu had no longer a consolidated existence. The heroes of those savage bands, Debauce, Hastier, Bary, Le Coq, Dabri, Delboulbe, Storkenfeld, had fallen either on the scaffold or beside it. There were no longer any chances of escape for those condemned in the daring courage of their defeated folly; they were not even capable of defending their own lives, which they coolly took themselves, like Piard, at the end of a gay dinner, to spare justice or vengeance the trouble. So our brigands were doomed to die.

Their appeal was rejected; but the judicial authorities were not the first to know it. Three shots fired under the walls of the prison informed the condemned men. The commissioner of the executive Directory, alarmed by this symptom of connivance, called out a part of the armed force of which my uncle was then the commander. At six-o'clock in the morning sixty horsemen were drawn up before the gate of the prison-yard.

Though the jailers had taken every possible precaution to prevent access to the prisoners, whom they had left the night before pinioned and chained, they found them in the morning unbound and armed to the teeth, and were wholly unable to make a long resistance. The four prisoners went out without difficulty, after locking up their keepers and bolting all the doors. Then, furnished with the keys, they easily crossed the prison space which divided them from the yard. Their appearance must have been terrifying to the populace, which awaited them before the iron gates. To preserve their freedom of movement, possibly to affect a security more threatening even than

the fame of their strength and intrepidity, perhaps to hide the flow of blood which would redden white linen and betray the presence of a death-wound, they were all four bare to the waist. Their braces crossed upon the chest, their broad red sashes bristling with weapons, their shouts of attack and fury, — all these things must have given an almost fantastic character to the scene. When they reached the yard they saw the gendarmerie drawn up, motionless, in a line impossible to break or avoid. They stopped for a moment and seemed to be conferring together. Leprêtre, who was, as I have said, their elder and their chief, waved his hand to the guard and said, with the graceful dignity that was peculiar to him:

"Very good, gentlemen of the gendarmerie!"

Then he passed in front of his comrades, bade them an ardent last farewell, and blew out his brains. Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert took an attitude of defence, pointing their weapons at the armed force. They did not fire; but the gendarmes regarded their attitude as hostile and fired a volley. Guyon fell dead on the body of Leprêtre, which had not moved. Amiet had his thigh broken near the groin. The "Biographie des Contemporains" says that he was executed. I have myself often heard it said that he died at the foot of the scaffold. Hyvert was left alone, his face calm, his eye terrible, a pistol in each vigorous and practised hand. Perhaps it was admiration for the attitude at bay of that fine young man with floating hair, who was known to have never taken life and from whom the law now exacted the penalty of blood, or perhaps it was the sight of those bodies over which he bounded like a wolf overtaken by the hunters, or merely the frightful novelty of the scene, but for a moment the troops were motionless. Hyvert saw it, and offered a compromise.

"Gentlemen," he said, "death, so be it! I am glad of it! I die with all my heart! But, let no one approach me, or I shoot him — except that man," he added, pointing to the executioner. "This is an affair between him and me; let no one meddle."

The concession was an easy one; for all present suffered at the prolongation of this horrible tragedy and were eager to have it over. When Hyvert saw that consent was given, he took one of his pistols between his teeth and with the hand thus freed he pulled a dagger from his belt and plunged it to the hilt into his breast. He remained standing and seemed astonished. They attempted to rush upon him.

"Stop, gentlemen!" he cried again, pointing his pistols at the gendarmes, while the blood flowed in great waves from the wound where the dagger was sticking. "Keep to the agreement; I will die alone, or three of us shall die. Forward!"

They let him do as he would. He went straight to the scaffold, turning the weapon in the wound.

"My soul must be riveted to my body!" he cried, "for I cannot die. Here, you! see if you can tear it out!"

This to the executioner.

A moment more and his head fell. Whether by accident or through some peculiar phenomenon of vitality, it rebounded and then rolled clear of the scaffold. People will still tell you in Bourg that Hyvert's head spoke.

I had not finished reading these words of Nodier's before I resolved to lay aside my "René d'Argonne" and take up the "Company of Jehu."

The next day I came down with my carpet-bag in my hand.

"Are you going away?" said Alexandre.

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"To Bourg in Bresse."

"What are you going to do there?"

"Visit localities, and consult the memories of all the inhabitants who saw the execution of Leprêtre, Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert."

Two roads lead to Bourg — coming from Paris, I mean; you can either leave the railway at Mâcon and take a diligence which goes from Mâcon to Bourg, or you can continue on to Lyon and take the railway between Bourg and Lyon. I was hesitating between the two routes when my mind was determined by a traveller who went a short distance in the same carriage with me. He was going to Bourg, where, he told me, he had frequent business; he was going by Lyon; consequently that must be the best way. I resolved to take it. I slept at Lyon, and the next day, by ten o'clock in the morning, I was at Bourg.

A newspaper printed in the second capital of the kingdom met me. It contained a sour article about me.

Lyon has never forgiven me, I believe, since 1833, and

that is now twenty-four years ago, for having said that it was not literary. Alas! I am, in 1857, of the same opinion still. I do not change my opinions easily.

There is another town in France which dislikes me almost as much as Lyon; and that is Rouen. Rouen has hissed all my plays, including "Comte Hermann." One day a Neapolitan boasted to me of having hissed Rossini and Malibran, "The Barbiere," and Desdemona. "That must be true," I answered, "because Rossini and Malibran boast, on their side, of having been hissed by the Neapolitans." So I boast of being hissed by the Rouenese. But once when I chanced to have a native-born Rouen man under my hand I resolved to find out why they hissed me in Rouen. Why not? I like to know everything, even trifles. The Rouen man replied: "We hiss you because we object to you." Why should n't they object to me? They objected to Joan of Arc. However, it could not be for the same reason, so I asked the Rouen man why he and his compatriots objected to me; I had never spoken ill of apple-sugar; I had been respectful to Monsieur Barbet all the time he was mayor, and in my capacity as delegate from the Society of Men of Letters to the inauguration of the statue of Corneille, I was the only man who thought of bowing to him before beginning my speech. There certainly was nothing in all that to draw down upon me the hatred of the Rouenese.

So to this haughty reply, "We hiss you because we object to you," I answered humbly, "Good God! why do you object to me?" "Oh, you know very well," replied the Rouen man. "I?" said I. "Yes, you." "Well, never mind, behave as if I didn't know, and tell me." "You remember that dinner that the town gave you on the inauguration of the statue of Corneille?" "Perfectly. Are they angry because I did not return it?" "No, that is not it." "What is it, then?" "Well, at that dinner they said to you: 'Monsieur Dumas, you ought to write a play for the town of Rouen, on a subject drawn from its

own history,'" "To which I replied: 'Nothing easier; I will come, whenever you send for me, and spend a fortnight in Rouen. You can give me a subject and during those fifteen days I'll write the play, and the profits shall go to the poor of the town.'" "That is true; you did say all that." "I don't see anything so wounding in that, to bring the hatred of the whole town upon me." "But when they added, 'Will you write it in prose?' what did you answer?" "Faith, I forget." "You answered, 'I will write it in verse, for that is soonest done.'" "Very likely." "Well?" "Well, what?" "What? why, it was an insult to Corneille, monsieur; that is why the Rouenese object to you, and will object to you for a long time to come."

This is literally true. Oh, most worthy Rouenese! I trust you will never do me the ill-turn of forgiving me and applauding me.

The journal I spoke of said that M. Dumas had only passed one night at Lyon, doubtless because a town that was not literary was unworthy to detain him longer. M. Dumas had, in fact, not thought of that at all, being in a hurry to get to Bourg; and no sooner had he arrived at the latter place than he asked to be shown to the office of the leading journal.

I knew that this paper was edited by a distinguished archæologist, who was also the editor of my friend Baux's book on the church at Brou. I asked for M. Milliet; M. Milliet came. We shook hands, and I explained the object of my journey.

"I can put you in the way of what you want," said he. "I will take you to one of our magistrates, who is writing the history of the province."

"But what period in your history?"

"He has just got down to 1822."

"Then that's all right. The events I want to relate date from 1799, and my heroes were executed in 1800; he has already passed that epoch and can give me every information. Let us go and see the magistrate."

On the way, Monsieur Millict told me that this same magistrate was a distinguished *gourmet.* Ever since Brillat-Savarin's day it is the fashion for magistrates to be *gourmets.* Unfortunately, many are contented to be *gourmands,* — which is not at all the same thing.

We were introduced into the magistrate's study. I saw a man with a shiny face and a jeering smile. He received me with that patronizing manner which historians deign to bestow on poets.

"Well, monsieur," he said, "you have come to look up subjects for novels in this poor region?"

"No, monsieur, my subject is found; I have come to consult historical documents about it."

"Good; I did not know it was necessary to give yourself so much trouble in order to write novels."

"You are mistaken, monsieur,— at any rate so far as I am concerned. I am in the habit of making very careful researches about the historical subjects of which I write."

"You might have sent some one here."

"Whoever I sent, not being absorbed in my subject, would pass over the most important facts without observing them. Besides, I make much use of localities, and I cannot describe them unless I see them."

"Then you mean to write the novel yourself?"

"Well, yes, monsieur. My last book was written by my valet; but it had such a great success that the scamp asked me higher wages,— such exorbitant ones, in fact, that, to my great regret, I had to part with him."

The magistrate bit his lips. Then, after a moment, he said: —

"Will you please inform me, monsieur, in what way I can assist your important work?"

"You can direct my researches, monsieur; as you have written a history of the department none of the leading events which took place in its chief town can be unknown to you."

"You are right, monsieur; I believe I am well informed on all points."

"Well then, monsieur, in the first place your department was the centre of the operations of The Company of Jehu."

"Monsieur, I have heard of The Company of Jesus," answered the magistrate, with his jeering smile.

"The Jesuits you mean, don't you? That is not what I am after."

"And not what I meant either. I alluded to the robbers of stage-coaches who infested the high-roads from 1797 to 1800."

"Well, monsieur, allow me to say that they are the very ones I came to Bourg to inquire about; they were called The Company of Jehu, not The Company of Jesus."

"What is the meaning of that title, The Company of Jehu? I like to get at the bottom of things."

"So do I, monsieur; that is why I do not confound highwaymen with apostles."

"It would certainly not be orthodox."

"But it is what you would have done, monsieur, if I had not come here expressly to correct your mistake, — I, a poet, you, an historian!"

"I await your explanation, monsieur," resumed the magistrate, pursing his lips.

"It is short and simple. Jehu was a king of Israel, anointed by Elisha to exterminate the house of Ahab. Elisha was Louis XVIII.; Jehu was Georges Cadoudal; the house of Ahab, the Revolution. That was why the plunderers of the mail-coaches who took the government money to support the war in La Vendée called themselves The Company of Jehu."

"Monsieur, I am happy to learn something at my age."

"Oh! monsieur, one can always learn, at any age; during life we learn man, in death we learn God."

"But," said the magistrate, with an impatient gesture, "may I be told in what way I can serve you?"

"Thus: Four of these young men, leaders among The Company of Jehu, were executed at Bourg, on the place du Bastion —"

"In the first place, monsieur, they do not execute on the place du Bastion; they execute on the Fair grounds."

"Now they do, monsieur,— for the last fifteen or twenty years, since Peytel,— but before that, and especially during the Revolution, they executed prisoners on the place du Bastion."

"Possibly."

"Undoubtedly. These four young men were named Leprêtre, Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert."

"I never heard those names."

"And yet they made a good deal of noise at the time, especially at Bourg."

"Are you sure, monsieur. that those men were executed here?"

"Quite sure."

"Where did you get your information?"

"From a man whose uncle, then in command of the gendarmerie, was present at the execution."

"Who was that?"

"Charles Nodier."

"Charles Nodier, the poet, the romance-writer?"

"If he had been an historian, monsieur, I would not insist on his facts. I discovered lately, in a visit I made to Varennes, the sort of reliance to be placed on historians. But precisely because he is a poet and a romance-writer I do rely upon Nodier's facts."

"You are at liberty to do so. But I know nothing of what you desire to learn; I even venture to suggest that if you have come to Bourg only to get information about the execution of Messieurs — What were their names?"

"Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert."

"— you have made a useless journey. For the last twenty years, monsieur, I have been searching the archives of this town, and I have seen nothing at all relating to any such matter."

"The archives of the town, monsieur, are not those of the record-office; perhaps I shall be able to find what I want in the record-office."

"Ah, monsieur, if you can find anything in that office you'll be a clever man; the records there are chaos, positively chaos; you would have to stay here a month and even then — even then —"

"I expect to stay only one day, monsieur; but if in that one day I discover what I want may I be permitted to impart it to you?"

"Yes, monsieur, yes, yes; and you will do me a great service."

"Not greater than that I came to ask of you; I shall tell you something you did not know, that is all."

You can imagine that on leaving the magistrate my sense of honor was piqued; I determined, cost what it might, to get that information about The Company of Jehu. I went after Milliet and fairly cornered him.

"Well," said he, "my wife's brother is a lawyer."

"He's my man. Let us go and find him."

"He is in court at this hour."

"Let us go to court."

"But your appearance will create an excitement, I warn you."

"Then go alone; tell him what the question is, and ask him to make a search. As for me, I shall go and look about the environs of the town so as to base my work on the localities. I will meet you, if you are willing, at half-past four on the place du Bastion."

"Certainly."

"I think I saw a forest as I came along?"

"The forest of Seillon."

"Bravo!"

"You want a forest?"

"It is indispensable to me."

"Then permit me to —"

"What?"

"— take you to a friend of mine, M. Leduc, a poet, who in his off moments is an inspector."

"Inspector of what?"

"Forests."

"I suppose there are no ruins in the forest?"

"There is a Chartreuse, which is not exactly in the forest, but is only a few hundred feet from it."

"But in the forest?"

"There is a sort of hermitage which they call La Correrie, belonging to the Chartreuse, with which it communicates by an underground passage."

"Good! Now if you can provide me with a grotto, you will satisfy my aspirations."

"There's the grotto of Ceyzeriat, but that is on the other side of the Reissouse."

"I don't mind that. If the grotto won't come to me I must do as Mohammed did, go to the grotto. Meantime let us go and find M. Leduc."

Five minutes later we were at M. Leduc's. Finding what the matter was, he instantly put himself, his horse, and carriage at my disposal. I accepted everything. There are men who offer kindnesses in a way to put you immediately at your ease. We went first to the Chartreuse. If I had built it myself it could not have suited my purpose better. A lonely cloister, a tangled garden, inhabitants that were almost savages. Chance, I thank thee!

From there we went to La Correrie; it was the supplement of the Chartreuse. I did not yet know what I could make of it; but it would evidently be very useful.

"Now, monsieur," I said to my obliging conductor, "I want some pretty site, rather gloomy, under tall trees, beside a river. Have you such a thing in these parts?"

"What do you want it for?"

"To build a château on it."

"What sort of château?"

"Of cards, bless you! I have a family to house: a model mother, a melancholy young girl, a frolicsome boy, and a poaching gardener."

"There is a spot we call Les Noires-Fontaines."

"That is a charming name."

"But there is no château on it."

"So much the better, for I should have had to pull it down."

"Let us go to the Noires-Fontaines."

We started; a quarter of an hour later we left the carriage near the ranger's house.

"We will take this wood-path," said M. Leduc, "it will bring us out where we want to go."

It led in fact to an open spot planted with tall trees which overshadowed three or four pools of water.

"This is what we call the Noires-Fontaines," said M. Leduc.

"And here will live Madame de Montrevel, Amélie, and little Édouard. Now, what are those villages I see over there?"

"The nearest is Montagnac; the one farther off, on the mountain, is Ceyzeriat."

"Is that where there is a grotto?"

"Yes; how did you know there was a grotto?"

"Never mind; go on, — the names of those other villages, please?"

"Saint-Just, Tréconnas, Ramasse, Villereversure."

"That will do."

"Have you enough?"

"Yes."

I took my note-book and made a plan of the locality, and wrote the names of the villages about in the places where M. Leduc had pointed them out to me.

"That's done," said I.

"Which way shall we go now?"

"The church of Brou must be somewhere about here?"

"Yes."

"Then let us go to the church of Brou."

"Do you want that in your novel?"

"Of course; you don't suppose that I should put my scene in a region which contains the architectural master-

piece of the sixteenth century without utilizing that masterpiece, do you ?"

"Let us go to the church at Brou."

Twenty minutes later the sexton showed us into that granite jewel-case, which contains the marble gems called the tombs of Marguerite of Austria, Marguerite de Bourbon, and Philibert le Beau.

"How happened it," I asked the sexton, "that all these treasures were not reduced to powder during the Revolution ?"

"Ah ! monsieur, the municipality had an idea."

"What was that ?"

"They turned the church into a store-house for forage."

"Yes, yes, and the hay saved the marble; you are right, my friend, that was an idea indeed !"

"Does the idea of the municipality afford you another ?" asked Monsieur Leduc.

"Faith, yes; and I shall have poor luck if I don't make something of it."

I looked at my watch.

"Three o'clock ! let us go to the prison; I have an appointment at four with M. Milliet on the place du Bastion."

"Wait a moment," said M. Leduc, "there is one thing more."

"What is that ?"

"Did you notice the motto of Marguerite of Austria ?"

"No; where is it ?"

"In various places; but see there, above her tomb."

"'*Fortune, infortune, fort 'une.*'"

"Precisely."

"Well, it is a play on words; what does it mean ?"

"Learned men say it means: 'Fate persecutes a woman.'"

"Let 's see about that."

"In the first place, we must suppose the motto to be derived from the Latin."

"True, it probably was."

"Well, then: *Fortuna infortunat* —"

"Oh, oh! *infortunat* — that is something of a solecism. Explain it."

"Explain it yourself."

"What do you say to this: '*Fortuna, infortuna, forti una*,' 'Fortune and misfortune are the same to the strong'?"

"Do you know, that may really be the true meaning."

"Bless me! that's what it is not to be a learned man, my good friend; we use our faculties, and faculties see clearer than science. Have you anything else to tell me?"

"No."

"Then let us go to the prison."

We got into the carriage and returned to town, where we stopped at the gate of the prison. I put my head out of the window.

"Oh! they 've spoilt it!" I cried out.

"Spoilt what?"

"It certainly was not like that in the days of *my* prisoners. Can I speak to the jailer?"

"Of course."

We knocked at the door. A man of about forty opened it. He recognized M. Leduc.

"My dear fellow," said M. Leduc, pointing me out, "this is a learned friend of mine —"

"Come, no nonsense!" I exclaimed, interrupting him.

"— who declares," went on M. Leduc, "that the prison is not the same as it was in the last century."

"That is true, Monsieur Leduc; it was pulled down and rebuilt in 1816."

"Then the interior arrangements are not the same?" said I.

"Oh, no, monsieur; they are all changed."

"Could I see a plan of the old prison?"

"Monsieur Martin, the architect, might be able to show you one."

"Is he any relation to Monsieur Martin, the lawyer?"

"His brother."

"Very good; then I can get the plan."

"If that is the case, we have nothing more to do here," remarked M. Leduc.

"Nothing."

"Can I leave you, then?"

"I shall be sorry to part with you, but I need nothing more."

"Shall I show you the way to the place du Bastion?"

"No, it is close by."

"What are you going to do this evening?"

"I will spend it with you, if you will allow me."

"Delighted: at nine o'clock a cup of tea will await you."

"I shall come for it."

I thanked M. Leduc; we shook hands and parted. I walked along the rue des Lisses (meaning Lists, from a combat which took place on the ground to which it leads), and then, skirting the Montburon garden, I reached the place du Bastion. This is a half-circle now used for the market-place of the town. In the middle of it stands the statue of Bichat, by David d'Angers, — Bichat in a frock-coat (why that exaggeration of realism?), laying his hand on the heart of a child about ten years of age, perfectly naked (why that excess of ideality?); extended at Bichat's feet lies a dead body. It is Bichat's book "Of Life and of Death" translated into bronze. I was standing looking at this statue, which exhibits both the merits and the defects of David d'Angers, when some one touched me on the shoulder. I looked round; it was M. Milliet. He held a paper in his hand.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well!" he replied, "victory!"

"What is that you have there?"

"The procès-verbal of the execution."

"Whose execution?"

"That of your four men."

"Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet —"

"And Hyvert."

"Give it to me."

"Here it is."

I took it and read: —

PROCÈS-VERBAL OF DEATH AND EXECUTION OF LAURENT GUYON, ÉTIENNE HYVERT, FRANCOIS AMIET, ANTOINE LEPRÊTRE. Condemned to death, 20th Thermidor, year VIII., executed 23d Vendémiaire, year IX.

This day, 23d Vendémiaire, year IX., the government commissioner to the court at Bourg, having received, at eleven o'clock at night, a despatch from the minister of justice, containing the trial and judgment which condemned to death Laurent Guyon, Étienne Hyvert, François Amiet, and Antoine Leprêtre, also the judgment of the court of appeals of the 6th instant, which rejects the appeal against the judgment of the 21st Thermidor, year VIII., did notify, by letter, between seven and eight o'clock the next morning, the four condemned men that their sentence would be executed this day at eleven o'clock. In the interval that elapsed before eleven o'clock the four accused persons shot and stabbed themselves in prison. Leprêtre and Guyon, rumor says, were dead; Hyvert mortally wounded and dying; Amiet mortally wounded but still conscious. All four, being in that state, were carried upon the scaffold, and, living or dead, were guillotined; at eleven and a half o'clock the sheriff Coin brought the procès-verbal of their execution to the Municipality, for the purpose of registering the deaths of these men.

The captain of gendarmerie then turned over to the justice of the peace the procès-verbal of what happened in the prison prior to the execution, of which he had been a witness. As for me, I was not present, but I certify to what I have learned from hearsay.

(Signed) DUBOST, clerk of the court.

Bourg, 23d Vendémiaire, year IX.

Ah! so it was the poet that was right, and not the historian! The captain of gendarmerie who had turned over to the justice of the peace the procès-verbal of what had happened in the prison, *at which he was present*, was Nodier's uncle. This procès-verbal thus handed over to the justice of peace was identical with the account engraven on the mind of the nephew, who, forty years later, gave it to

the world, unaltered, in that masterpiece of his, entitled "Souvenirs de la Révolution." The whole series of papers was in the record-office. M. Martin offeréd to have copies made of them, — inquiry, procès-verbaux, and judgment. I had the "Souvenirs de la Révolution" in my pocket; I held in my hand the procès-verbal of execution, which confirmed every fact that Nodier had recorded.

"Let us go to the magistrate," I said to M. Milliet.

"Let us go to the magistrate," he repeated.

The magistrate was confounded; I left him convinced that poets know history as well as historians, — if not better.

ALEX DUMAS.

PROLOGUE.

THE TOWN OF AVIGNON.

We do not know if the prologue we are about to present to our readers is very useful, but we are unable to resist the desire to make it, not the first chapter, but the preface to this book.

The more we advance in life and the more we advance in art, the more convinced we are that nothing is abrupt and isolated, that nature and society move by evolution and not by chance, and that each event which unfolds itself to-day before our eyes, be it a sad or joyous flower, fragrant or fetid, beneficent or fatal, was sown in the past and has its roots in days anterior to ours, just as it will bear its fruits in the future.

Man, when young, takes time as it comes, in love with the joys in hand, indifferent to the morrow. Youth is the springtide, with its dewy dawns and its glorious evenings; if, at times, the storm-clouds gather they mutter and burst and vanish, leaving the heavens bluer, the air purer, nature more smiling than before. What use is there in reflecting on the causes of a storm which passes rapidly like a caprice and is as evanescent as a fancy; before we seize the meaning of the meteorological phenomena the storm has passed.

But it is not so with those other and terrible phenomena which at the close of summer, threaten the harvests; those of the autumn, which imperil the vintage: we must ask whence they come, whither they go, if we would find the means of preventing them.

To the thinker, the historian, the poet, there is far deeper subject for reflection in revolutions, those tempests

of the social atmosphere which drench the earth with blood and destroy a generation of men, than in the storms of the sky which deluge a harvest or ravage a vineyard; the fruits of the earth are the hope of one year only, their loss can be repaired in the coming year — unless the wrath of the Lord be upon us.

Therefore, in other days, whether from forgetfulness, or carelessness, or ignorance, — for ignorance is bliss, it is fools who are wise, — in other days, I say, I should have related the history I am going to tell you to-day without stopping to describe the place where the first scene of the book occurs. I should have written that scene heedlessly, and passed through the South like any other province, and called Avignon by the name of any town that suited me. But to-day it is not so. I am no longer blown about by the gusts of spring; I have now to do with the storms of summer and the tempests of autumn. To-day when I name Avignon I evoke a spectre; and, like Mark Antony when he held up Cæsar's toga and said, —

> "Look! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
> See what a rent the envious Casca made;
> Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed, —"

I say, beholding the sanguinary shroud of the papal town, "Behold the blood of the Albigenses and the blood of the Cevennais; this is the blood of republicans, that the blood of royalists; behold the blood of Lescuyer, the blood of the Maréchal Brune." Then I fall into the clutches of an awful sadness and I begin to write; but at the very first lines I perceive that, without my being aware of it, the chisel of the historian is in my hand instead of the pen of a romance-writer.

Well, well! let me be both. Reader, grant these ten, fifteen, twenty pages to the historian; the novelist will do the rest.

I shall say, therefore, a few words about Avignon, the place where the first scene of this book opens. But,

perhaps, before reading what I have to say, it may be well for you, my reader, to cast your eyes over what the national historian, François Nouguier says of it.

"Avignon," he says, "a town noble for its antiquity, delightful for its site, superb for its walls, smiling for the fertility of its soil, charming for the gentleness of its people, magnificent for its palace, beautiful for its fine streets, marvellous for the construction of its bridge, rich by its commerce, and known to all the world."

May the shade of François Nouguier forgive us if we do not see his town with quite the same eyes that he does. Those who know Avignon may decide between the historian and the novelist.

It is proper to say, in the first place, that Avignon is a town by itself,— a town of extreme passions. The period of religious dissensions which have filled her with political hatreds dates back to the twelfth century; the valleys of the Mont Ventoux sheltered, after their flight from Lyon, Pierre de Valdo and his Vaudois, the ancestors of those protestants who, under the name of Albigenses, cost the counts of Toulouse and gave to the papacy the seven castles which Raymond VI. possessed in Languedoc.

Avignon, a powerful republic, governed by podestas, refused to submit to the king of France. One morning Louis VIII. — who thought it an easier thing to make a crusade against Avignon, like Simon de Montfort, than against Jerusalem, like Philip Augustus — one morning, we say, Louis VIII. appeared before the gates of Avignon, demanding admittance, lance in rest, visor down, banners unfurled, and the war-trumpets sounding. The burghers refused. They offered the king, as a last concession, a peaceable entrance, bare-headed, lance erect, and the royal banner alone displayed. Whereupon the king laid siege to the town. The siege lasted three months, during which time, so say the chroniclers, the burghers of Avignon returned to the French soldiers arrow for arrow, wound for wound, death for death.

The town at last capitulated. Louis VIII. was accompanied by the cardinal-legate of Rome, San Angelo; it was he who dictated the terms of surrender, true priestly terms, hard and unconditional. The people of Avignon were condemned to demolish their ramparts, fill up their moats, pull down three hundred towers, give up their ships, and burn all their implements of war. They were also to pay an enormous impost, abjure the Vaudois heresy, and maintain in Palestine thirty men, fully equipped and armed, to assist in the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. And furthermore, that a watch might be kept over the accomplishment of these conditions (the papal bull can still be seen in the archives of the town), a brotherhood of penitents was founded, which, after a lapse of six centuries, exists at the present time. In opposition to these brethren, who were called the "White Penitents," an order of Black Penitents was founded, inspired with the spirit of the opposition of the counts of Toulouse.

From that day forth religious hatreds became political hatreds. It was not enough that Avignon was a region of heresy, it was now to become the theatre of a schism in the Church.

We must be allowed a short digression on the subject of the French Rome. Strictly speaking, it is not necessary to the drama of which we treat, and perhaps we should do better to spring into the heart of that drama at once; but we hope the reader will pardon us for not doing so. We write especially for those who like to find something in a novel that is other than a novel.

In 1285 Philippe le Bel came to the throne. That is a great historic date. The papacy — which, in the person of Gregory VII., made head against the emperor of Germany, and later, though conquered materially by Henry IV., did, morally, conquer him — the papacy was slapped in the face by a simple Italian gentleman, and the iron gauntlet of the Colonna reddened the cheek of Boniface VIII. But the king of France, by whose hand the blow was really dealt,

what happened to him under the successor of Boniface VIII.?

That successor was Benedict XI., a man of low estate, but one who might have shown himself a man of genius had they given him time. Too feeble to fly in the face of Philippe le Bel, he found a means to assail him which, two hundred years later, would have been the envy of the founder of a celebrated order: he publicly pardoned Colonna. To pardon Colonna was the same as declaring him guilty; guilty men alone need pardon. If Colonna was guilty, so was the king of France. There was certainly some danger in sustaining that argument; and so it happened that Benedict XI. was pope for only eight months. One day a veiled woman who called herself a lay-sister from the convent of Santa-Petronilla at Perugia, presented him, while at dinner, with a basket of figs. Was there an asp in the basket, as there was in Cleopatra's? At any rate on the following day the Holy See was vacant.

Then Philippe le Bel had a very singular idea, so singular that it must have seemed to him at first an hallucination. It was this: to get possession of the Roman papacy, carry it to France, put it in jail and make it coin money for his benefit. The reign of Philippe le Bel was the accession of Gold to its throne. Gold was the one sole God of this king who had slapped a pope's face. Saint Louis took a priest for his minister, the worthy Abbé Suger; Philippe le Bel took two bankers for his ministers, two Florentines, named Biscio and Musiato.

Do you expect, my dear reader, that I am going to fall into the philosophical commonplace of anathematizing gold? Not at all. In the thirteenth century gold meant progress. Till then the soil was the only wealth. Gold was now to be the soil coined, the soil convertible, exchangeable, transportable, divisible, the soil subtilized, spiritualized, if I may say so. As long as the soil was not represented by gold, man, like the god Thermes, that landmark of the fields, had his feet buried in the earth. In former times

the earth bore the man; in these days man shoulders the earth. But gold — gold had to be drawn from where it was; and it was elsewhere than in the mines of Chili or of Mexico. Gold was in the hands of the Jews and the churches. To dig it out of that double mine needed more than a king, — it needed a pope.

That is why Philippe le Bel, the great getter of gold, resolved to have a pope of his own. Benedict XI. being dead, there was a conclave at Perugia; the French cardinals were in a majority. Philippe le Bel cast his eyes on the archbishop of Bordeaux, Bertrand de Got. He made an appointment to meet him in a forest near Saint-Jean d'Angely. Bertrand de Got was careful not to miss that appointment. The king and the archbishop heard mass together, and at the moment when the Host was elevated they bound themselves by the God they glorified to absolute secrecy.

Bertrand de Got was still ignorant of the matter in question. When mass had been heard the king turned to the priest. "Archbishop," he said, "it is in my power to make you pope."

Bertrand de Got, not listening for more, flung himself at the king's feet. "What must I do in return?" he said.

"Six favors which I shall ask of you," responded Philippe le Bel.

"It is for you to command, for me to obey," said the future pope.

That was how the oath of servitude was taken. The king raised the archbishop, kissed him on the lips, and said: —

"The six favors are these: first, that you reconcile me absolutely with the Church, and obtain my pardon for the misdemeanor I committed in regard to Boniface VIII.; second, that you restore to me and mine the right of communion which the court of Rome denied me; third, that you grant me the tithes of the clergy in my kingdom for a period of five years, so as to help me with the costs of the

war in Flanders; fourth, that you destroy and annihilate the memory of Pope Boniface VIII.; fifth, that you restore the rank and dignity of cardinal to Jacopo and Pietro Colonna. The sixth and last favor promised I will reserve now, and tell you of it later, when the time comes."

Bertrand de Got swore to the promises and favors he had heard recited, and also to the promise and favor he had not heard. That which the king did not dare to exact from him at the time was the abolition of the Templars.

In addition to the promise and oath taken on the *corpus Domini*, Bertrand de Got gave his brother and two of his nephews as hostages. The king, on his side, swore that he would have the archbishop elected pope. This scene, which took place at one of the crossways of the forest in the night time, was more like the summons and evocation of a demon by a magician, than a meeting and an alliance between a king and a pope. Consequently, the coronation of the king, which took place soon after at Lyon, when the captivity of the Church began, seemed to be not at all agreeable to God; for just as the royal cortège passed a wall covered with spectators, the structure gave way, the king was wounded, and the Duc de Bretagne killed. The pope was knocked over, and his tiara rolled in the mud!

Bertrand de Got was elected pope, under the name of Clement V. Clement V. kept all the promises of Bertrand de Got. Philippe was absolved; holy communion was restored to him and his; the purple again covered the shoulders of the Colonna; the Church was made to pay for the war in Flanders and also for the crusade of Philippe de Valois against the Greek Empire. The memory of Pope Boniface was, if not destroyed and annihilated, blasted and dishonored. The walls of the Temple were razed, and the Templars burned in the open space on the Pont-Neuf. All these edicts (they were not called bulls now that the temporal power dictated them), all these edicts were dated at Avignon.

Philippe le Bel was the richest king of the French mon-

archy; his treasury was inexhaustible, for his treasury was the pope. He had bought him, and he used him. He put him in the press, and just as wine and cider flow from grapes and apples, so from this crushed pope flowed gold. The pontificate, slapped by Colonna in the person of Boniface VIII., abdicated the empire of the world in that of Clement V.

We have now told how the king by blood and the pope by gold came to be where they were. We know how they departed from the scene. Jacques de Molay from his pyre summoned them both to appear before God within a year. Ἢ τὸ γέρων σιβυλλία, said Aristophanes: "Dying hoary-heads have the souls of sibyls." Clement V. died first. He saw his palace burned in a dream. "From that moment," says Baluze, "he became gloomy and lasted only a short time." Seven months later it was Philippe's turn. Some say he died hunting, knocked over by a wild boar; Dante is among them. "The king," he says, "who was seen beside the Seine coining false money, died from the tusk of a boar." But Guillaume de Nangis makes the royal coiner of base money die a death that was far otherwise providential. "Undermined by some disease unknown to the physicians," says Nangis, "Philippe wasted away, to the great astonishment of everybody; for neither his pulse nor his urine showed any cause of illness nor the imminence of his danger."

The king of uproar, the king of debauchery, Louis X., surnamed le Hutin, succeeded his father, Philippe le Bel. John XXII. was pope in the place of Clement V. Avignon then became a second Rome; John XXII. and Clement VI. anointed her queen of luxury. The manners and customs of the time made her the sovereign lady of license and self-indulgence. In place of her towers, pulled down by San Angelo, Hernandez de Héredi, grand-master of Saint-John of Jerusalem, girdled her with a belt of walls. Dissolute monks transformed the once blessed precincts of the convents into places of debauchery and luxury; pros-

titutes possessed themselves of the diamonds of the tiara, and wore them in bracelets and necklaces, while the echoes of Vaucluse came to her ears bearing the soft melodious strophes of Petrarch.

This lasted until King Charles V., a virtuous and religious monarch, having resolved to put a stop to the scandal, sent the Maréchal de Boucicaut to drive the anti-pope, Benedict XIII., out of Avignon. But when the latter saw the French troops he remembered that before he was pope, under the name of Benedict XIII., he had been a soldier himself and a captain, by the name of Pietro di Luna. For five months he made a strong defence, pointing his engines of war with his own hand from the walls of his castle, and finding them far more murderous than his pontifical thunderbolts. Forced at last to fly, he issued from the town by a postern, after destroying a hundred houses and killing four thousand of the inhabitants of Avignon. He took refuge in Spain, where the king of Arragon offered him sanctuary. There, every morning, from the top of a tower, assisted by two priests who constituted his sacred college, he blessed the world, which was none the better for it, and cursed his enemies, who were none the worse. At last, finding that he was about to die, and fearing that the schism in the Church would die with him, he made his two vicars cardinals, on condition that as soon as he was dead one of them would elect the other pope. This was done. The new pope continued the schism for a short time, supported by the cardinal who had proclaimed him; but before long they both negotiated with Rome, made honorable amends, and returned to the bosom of the true Church, one as archbishop of Seville, the other as archbishop of Toledo.

From that time until 1790, Avignon, widowed of her popes, had been governed by papal legates and vice-legates. In seventy years seven sovereign pontiffs had resided within her walls; she had seven hospitals, seven fraternities of penitents, seven convents of men, seven

convents of women, seven parishes, seven cemeteries. To those who know Avignon there was at this time, and there still are, two towns in the town,—the town of the priests, the Roman town; the town of the merchants, the French town: the town of the priests, with its papal palace, its hundred churches, its innumerable bell-towers, always ready to sound the tocsin of conflagration, the knell of slaughter; and the town of the merchants, with its Rhone, its silk-weavers, its crossways going from north to south, and from west to east, from Lyon to Marseille, from Nîmes to Turin; the French town, the cursèd town, anxious to have a king, eager to obtain its freedom, and quivering under a sense of slavery, — slavery to priests, vassalage to clergy who were the lords.

The clergy, — not the pious priests, tolerant, austere in their duty and charitable, living in the world to console and edify it, but never mingling in its joys or its passions, — the clergy, we mean, such as ambition, intrigues, and greed had made them; that is to say, the court abbés, rivalling the Roman abbés, lazy, libertine, elegant, bold, kings of fashion, autocrats of society, kissing the hands of ladies of whom they boasted themselves the lovers, and giving their own hands to be kissed by the women of the people whom they honored by making them their mistresses. Do you want a type of such priests? Take the Abbé Maury. Proud as a duke, insolent as a lackey, the son of a shoemaker, but more aristocratic than the son of a great lord.

It is easy to understand that these two classes of inhabitants, representing, one heresy, the other orthodoxy; one the French party, the other the Roman party; one the party of absolute monarchy, the other the party of constitutional progress, — were not elements of peace and security in the old pontifical town; it is easy, we say, to understand how it was that when the Revolution broke forth in Paris and showed itself by the taking of the Bastille, the two parties in Avignon, still hot from the religious wars,

under Louis XIV., did not remain inert in each other's presence.

We have said that Avignon was a town of priests; let us add, a town of hatreds. There are no better places to learn to hate than religious communities. The heart of the child, elsewhere pure of evil passions, is there born full of paternal hatreds bequeathed from father to son for eight centuries; and when at the close of a hating life that child departs he bequeaths the diabolical inheritance to his children. So, when the first cry of liberty resounded through France, the French town of Avignon arose in joy and hope. The moment had come at last to protest aloud against her sale *in æternum* to the hardest and most exacting of masters, the Roman pontiff. All France was about to unite on the Champ-de-Mars in the great fraternal embrace of the Federation. Was she not France? Were they not Frenchmen? They appointed delegates; these delegates went to the legate, and asked him respectfully to leave the town, giving him twenty-four hours in which to do so.

During the night the papists amused themselves by hanging from a gibbet a stuffed figure wearing the tri-color cockade.

Men have changed the course of the Rhone, they turn the precipitous Durance into a canal, they build dykes and arrest the angry torrents which, as the snows melt, come rushing in liquid avalanches from the summit of Mont Ventoux; but what shall stay this mighty flood, this living flood, this human torrent, which, bursting its bonds, rushed, leaping, through the streets of Avignon? God himself put forth no hand to stay it.

Catching sight of the stuffed figure, with the national colors, swinging at the end of a rope, the French town rose from its foundations with cries of rage. Four papists, suspected of the deed, — two nobles, one burgher and a workman, — were dragged from their homes and hanged beside the image. This was the 11th of June, 1793.

The whole French town wrote to the National Assembly that she gave herself to France, and with her, her Rhone, her commerce, the South, and half Provence. The National Assembly was in one of its periods of reaction; it did not wish to quarrel with the pope, it was keeping up appearances with the king. It delayed an answer. From that moment the rising in Angoulême became a revolt; and the pope was free to do with Avignon what the court would have done with Paris after the taking of the Bastille, if the Assembly had delayed the proclamation of the Rights of man. The pope ordered all that had been done in Comtat-Venaissin to be annulled. The privileges of the nobles and clergy were re-established, and the Inquisition was revived in all its severity.

These pontifical decrees were affixed to the walls. One man, alone, in open day, in the face of the whole town, dared go straight to the wall and tear down the decree. His name was Lescuyer. He was not a young man; it was not the fire of youth that impelled him. No; he was almost an old man, and did not belong to the town. He was a Frenchman, from Picardy, ardent, yet reflective, — a former notary settled for some time past in Avignon.

His act was a crime all Roman Avignon remembered. It was so great that the Virgin wept!

You see Avignon is another Italy. She must have miracles at any price; and if God does not perform them there is always some one at hand to invent them. Moreover, a miracle must be a miracle about the Virgin. The Virgin belongs to Italy, that land of poesy, — *La Madonna*. All the mind, the heart, the language of Italians are full of those two words.

It was in the Church of the Franciscans that the miracle took place. The crowd rushed there. It was, indeed, a great thing to see the Virgin weep; but a rumor was spread at the same time, which brought the excitement to a height. A large coffer, tightly closed, had been carried through the town. It roused the curiosity of every one.

What did it contain? Two hours later the coffer was forgotten; for it now said that eighteen trunks were seen going towards the Rhone. As for their contents, that was revealed by a porter. They were articles from the Mont-de-piété, which the French party were taking with them into exile. Pawned articles were, of course, the property of the poor, whom these men were robbing. The poorer the town is, the richer is the Mont-de-piété. Few Monts-de-piété were richer than that at Avignon. It was a theft, an infamous theft!

Whites and Reds, papists and Republicans, rushed together to the Church of the Franciscans, crying out that the municipality must give an account of their proceedings. Lescuyer was the secretary of the municipality. His name was flung to the crowd, not for having torn down the pontifical decrees, — for that the populace would have applauded him, — but for having signed the order to the keeper of the Mont-de-piété to give up the articles in pawn.

Four men were despatched to seize Lescuyer and bring him to the church. He was found in the street, on his way to the municipality. The four men sprang upon him and dragged him to the church with ferocious cries. When they reached it Lescuyer saw, from the flaming eyes that met him, the clenched fists that threatened him, the shouts that demanded his life, — Lescuyer saw that instead of entering the House of the Lord, he was in a circle of hell forgotten by Dante. The only idea he could form as to this sudden hatred was that it came from his tearing down the pontifical posters. He rushed into the pulpit, and in the voice of a man who not only does not blame himself, but who is ready to do the thing over again, he said: —

"Brothers! I think the revolution necessary; I have, therefore, done all in my power — "

The fanatical Roman party saw that if Lescuyer explained, Lescuyer was saved. That was not what they

wanted; they wanted a victim. So they flung themselves upon him, they tore him from the pulpit, and thrust him into the midst of the howling mob, which dragged him to the altar, uttering that dreadful species of cry, which resembles partly the hissing of a snake, and partly the roar of a tiger, — that murderous *zou, zou!* peculiar to the populace of Avignon.

Lescuyer recognized that fatal cry; he tried to gain refuge at the foot of the altar. He gained none; he fell there. A workman, carrying a stick, struck him so violent a blow on the head that the stick broke in two. Then the crowd hurled itself on that poor body, and with the mixture of ferocity and gayety peculiar to Southern peoples, the men began to dance on his stomach, singing; and the women, crying out that he should expiate his blasphemies against the pope, cut his lips, or rather, they scalloped his lips with their scissors.

And out of this hideous group arose a cry, a groan; and that death-groan said, "In the name of Heaven! in the name of the Virgin! in the name of humanity! kill me at once!"

The cry was heard; and instantly by common consent the murderers stood aside. They left the wretched man lying there bloody, disfigured, gashed, to die slowly. Five hours this lasted, during which, amid shouts of laughter, insults, jeers from the crowd, that poor body lay there palpitating on the steps of the altar. That is how they kill men in Avignon.

But stay; there is still another way.

A man of the French party had a sudden idea, which told him to go to the Mont-de-piété, and get information. There he found everything in order; not a fork nor a spoon had been removed. So, then, it was not as an accomplice in robbing the people that Lescuyer had been so cruelly murdered. It was for being a patriot!

There was, at this time, in Avignon, a man who controlled the populace. All those terrible leaders of the

South of France have obtained such fatal celebrity that it suffices to name them. Everybody, even the least educated person, knows them. This man was Jourdan. Liar and braggart, he had made the ignorant populace believe that it was he who had cut the throat of the governor of the Bastille. So they called him Jourdan Coup-tête. It was not his real name, which was Mathieu Jouve. Neither was he a Provençal; he came from Puy-en-Velay. He had first been a muleteer on those rough heights which surround his native town; then a soldier, who never went to the wars, or the wars might have made him more human; after that, he kept a drinking-shop in Paris. In Avignon he sold the product of the country, madder.

This man collected three hundred followers, seized the gates of the town, left half his troop to guard them, and marched with the rest upon the church of the Franciscans, preceded by two pieces of cannon. These he stationed in front of the church and fired them into it at random. Lescuyer's murderers fled like a flock of frightened birds, leaving some of their number dead on the church steps. Jourdan and his men tramped over the bodies and entered the church. No one was there but the Virgin and the wretched Lescuyer, still breathing. Jourdan and his comrades were careful not to put him out of his misery; his death-agony was to serve their ends, as a means of exciting the mob. They picked up that remnant of a living being, three-quarters dead, and bore it along, bleeding, quivering, gasping in death.

Every one fled from the sight, closing doors and windows. At the end of an hour Jourdan and his three hundred men were masters of the town. Lescuyer was dead; but what of that? They no longer needed his agony. Jourdan profited by the terror he had inspired, and arrested, or caused to be arrested, eighty-four persons, murderers, or so-called murderers, of Lescuyer. Thirty of them had probably never set foot in the church. But when you have a good opportunity to make away with

your enemies, you ought to profit by it; such luck is rare. These eighty persons were huddled together into the Trouillas tower. The proper historical name of the place is the Tour de la Glacière. Why did they change it to the Tour Trouillas? The word is unclean, and suits the horrid deed that was now to be performed there.

This tower had been the scene of the tortures of the Inquisition. Still to be seen on the walls is the greasy soot which rose with the smoke of the wood on which human flesh was burning. They still show you, to-day, the machinery of torture carefully preserved, — the caldron, the oven, the wooden horse, the chains, the dungeons, even the rotten bones. Nothing is wanting.

It was in this tower, built by Clement V., that they now locked up the eighty-four prisoners. But these eighty-four prisoners once locked up became embarrassing. Who was to judge them? There were no legally constituted courts but those of the papacy. Could they kill these men as they had killed Lescuyer?

We have said that a third at least, perhaps half, of the prisoners had not only taken no part in the murders, but had never even set foot in the church. How could they be killed? The killing must have the color of reprisals. But in any case the killing of eighty-four men required a number of executioners. A species of tribunal was improvised by Jourdan, and held its sitting in one of the law-courts. It had a clerk named Raphel, a president, half Italian, half French, an orator in the popular dialect, named Barbe Savournin de la Roua, and three or four other devils, — a baker, a pork-butcher, etc., — whose names are lost in the multitude of events. These were the men who cried out, "We must kill them all; if one escapes, he will be witness against us."

But, as we have said, killers were lacking. There were not more than a handful of men in the courtyard, all belonging to the petty tradesmen and working men of Avignon, — a hair-dresser, a shoemaker, a cobbler, a

mason, an upholsterer, — and they were armed at random; one had a sabre, another a bayonet, a third an iron bar, the fourth a bit of wood, hardened by fire. All these men were chilled by a fine October rain. It was difficult to turn them into assassins. Pooh! nothing is difficult to the devil!

In crises like these there comes an hour when God appears to abandon the earth. Then the devil gets his chance. The devil entered in person the cold and muddy courtyard. He assumed the appearance in face and form of an apothecary named Mendes. He set up a table, lighted by two lanterns; on this table he placed glasses, jugs, pitchers, bottles.

What infernal beverage was poured into those mysterious receptacles of all shapes? No one ever knew; but the result is known. All those who drank that devil's liquor were seized with a fever of fury, a lust of blood and murder. The door was shown to them, and they flung themselves into the dungeon.

The massacre lasted all night. All night the cries, the moans, the death-rattles sounded through the darkness. All were killed, all were slaughtered, — men and women. It was long in doing; the butchers were drunk and ill-armed; but they did it.

Among the butchers was a child, remarked for his bestial cruelty, his immoderate thirst for blood. It was Lescuyer's son. He killed, and killed, and killed again; he boasted of having with his childish hand killed four women and ten men. "I can kill as I like," he said; "I 'm not fifteen, and they can't punish me."

As they killed they flung their victims, wounded or dying, dead bodies or living beings, into the pit of the Trouillas tower, sixty feet down. The men were thrown first, the women later. The assassins wanted time to violate those who were young and pretty. At nine in the morning, after twelve hours' massacre, a voice was heard from the depths of that sepulchre: —

"In mercy, kill me! I cannot die."

A man — it was the armorer Bouffier — leaned over the edge of the pit and looked down. The others dared not.

"Who cried?" they asked.

"It was Lami," replied Bouffier.

Then, when he returned, they asked him: —

"What did you see down there?"

"A queer marmalade," he answered; "all pell-mell, — men and women, priests and pretty girls. Enough to make one die of laughing."

"There 's no denying it, man is a vile being," said the Comte de Monte-Cristo to M. de Villefort.

Well, it is in that town still reeking with blood, still breathless with these last massacres, that we now introduce two of the principal personages of our history.

I.

A TABLE D'HÔTE.

October 9, 1799, on a fine day of that southern autumn which ripens the oranges of Hyères and the grapes of Saint-Péray at the two extremities of Provence, a travelling-carriage, drawn by three post-horses, was crossing at full speed the bridge across the Durance between Cavailhon and Château-Renard, on its way to Avignon, the former papal city, which a decree issued eight years earlier, May 25, 1791, had reunited to France, — a reunion confirmed by the treaty signed at Tolentino, in 1797, between General Bonaparte and Pope Pius VI.

The carriage entered Avignon by the Porte d'Aix, traversed, without slackening speed, the whole length of the town with its narrow, crooked streets, built to escape both wind and sun, and drew up not fifty feet from the Porte d'Oulle, at the hotel du Palais-Égalité, which they were then beginning very quietly to call the hotel du Palais-Royal, the name it bore in former days, and still bears to-day.

These few insignificant words about the name of an inn before which the travelling-carriage we have in view had stopped, show plainly enough the state which France was in under that government of Thermidorian reaction known as the Directory. After the Revolutionary struggle which took place between the 14th of July, 1789, and the 9th Thermidor, 1794; after the events of the 5th and 6th of October, of June 21, August 10, September 2 and 3, May 21, Thermidor 29, and Prairial 1; after the executions of the king and his judges, the queen and her accusers, the

Girondins and the Cordeliers, the moderates and the Jacobins, France became conscious of the most horrible, most nauseous of all exhaustions, — the lassitude of blood! The country had therefore returned, if not to a need of monarchy, at least to the desire for a strong government, in which it could put some confidence, on which it could lean; a government which would act for it, and enable it to rest in peace and recover itself.

In place of this government, thus vaguely desired, the country obtained the feeble and irresolute Directory, composed at the present time of the voluptuous Barras, the intriguing Sieyès, the brave Moulins, the insignificant Roger Ducos, and the honest but rather too simple-minded Gohier. The result was a questionable dignity before the world at large, and a very doubtful tranquillity at home.

It is true that at the moment of which we write, our armies, so glorious during those epic campaigns of 1796–97, and lately thrown back for a time toward France by Scherer's incapacity at Verona and Cassano, and by the defeat and death of Joubert at Novi, were beginning to resume the offensive. Moreau had defeated Souwarov at Basignano; Brune had defeated the Duke of York and General Hermann at Bergen; Masséna had annihilated the Austro-Russians at Zurich; Korsakof had escaped with difficulty; and the Austrian Hotz, with three other generals, were killed and five made prisoners. Masséna saved France at Zurich, just as Villars, ninety years earlier, had saved it at Denain.

But the interior of the nation was not in so good a state, and the Directory was, it must be said, extremely embarrassed between the war in La Vendée and the guerrilla banditti of the South, to whom the inhabitants of Avignon, according to custom, were by no means averse.

The two travellers who got out of their carriage at the door of the Hôtel du Palais-Royal had, undoubtedly, some reason to fear the condition of mind in which the always excitable papal town might be; for just before they reached

Orgon, at a point where three roads met (one leading to Nîmes, the second to Carpentras, the third to Avignon), the postilion stopped his horses, and asked, turning round to them: —

"Will the citizens go by Avignon or Carpentras?"

"Which is the shortest way?" said the elder of the travellers in a harsh, imperative voice; although visibly the elder, he was not more than thirty years of age.

"Oh, the road through Avignon, citizen, by a good four miles."

"Then go by Avignon," was the answer.

And the carriage started again at a pace which showed that the *citizen* travellers, as the postilion called them, though the term *monsieur* was beginning to reappear in conversation, paid generous fees. The same desire for no delay was shown as they entered the hotel. It was again the elder of the two who spoke. He asked if they could dine at once; and the manner in which he asked seemed to show that his gastronomic demands would be few if the meal could be quickly served.

"Citizen," replied the landlord, who had come to the door, napkin in hand, on hearing the wheels, "you shall be rapidly and comfortably served in your own room; but if you would allow me to advise — "

He hesitated.

"Oh, go on!" said the younger of the travellers, speaking for the first time.

"Well, it is that you should dine at the table d'hôte, as the gentleman who came in that carriage is now doing. The dinner is excellent and all served." So saying, the landlord pointed to another travelling-carriage, very comfortably appointed, drawn by two horses, which stamped impatiently while the postilion was finding his patience in a bottle of Cahors wine under the window.

The first motion of those to whom the proposal was made was negative; but on second thoughts the elder of the two travellers, as if he had changed his mind, made an

interrogative sign to his companion, who answered it with a look which signified, "You know that I am at your orders."

"Very well, be it so," said the one who took the initiative; "we will dine at the table d'hôte." Then, turning to the postilion, who, hat in hand, was awaiting orders, he added, "Put the horses to in half an hour, not later."

The landlord pointed out the dining-room; and the travellers entered it, the elder of the two walking first, the other following him. Everybody knows the impression produced at a table d'hôte by new-comers. All eyes were turned upon them; the conversation, which seemed to be animated, stopped. The guests were made up of the frequenters of the hotel, the occupant of the carriage which was waiting in the courtyard, a wine-merchant from Bordeaux, staying in Avignon for reasons we shall presently relate, and a number of travellers going from Marseille to Lyon by the diligence.

The new arrivals bowed to the company with a slight inclination of the head, and sat down at the farther end of the table, separating themselves from the rest of the guests by three or four empty places. This seemingly aristocratic reserve increased the curiosity of which they were the object. Moreover, they gave the impression of unquestionable distinction, though their clothes were simple in the extreme. Both wore high-top boots and breeches, coats with long tails, overcoats, and broad-brimmed hats, which was the general dress of all young men of the period. But what distinguished them from the elegant young men in Paris, and even in the provinces, was their long, straight hair and the black stock buckled round their necks in the military fashion. A *muscadin*, — that was the name given to the dandies of the period, — a *muscadin* wore his hair like spaniels' ears, puffed beside his temples, the rest combed up and tied behind his head in a bag, and a huge cravat with long floating ends, in which his chin was buried. Some had reacted, if we may so call it, to powder.

As to the personality of the young men, they presented two diametrically opposite types. The elder of the two, he who had several times taken the initiative, and whose voice, even in its most familiar intonations, denoted the habit of command, was, as we have said, about thirty years of age, with black hair parted in the middle, and falling straight each side of his temples to his shoulders. He had the swarthy skin of a man who has travelled in southern climates; the lips were thin, the nose straight, the teeth white, and the eyes were the falcon eyes which Dante gives to Cæsar. His figure was short rather than tall, his hand delicate, his foot slender and elegant. He betrayed a certain awkwardness of manner which seemed to show that he was wearing for the moment a dress to which he was not accustomed; and when he spoke, his hearers, had they been beside the Loire instead of beside the Rhone, would have noticed in his pronunciation a marked Italian accent.

His companion seemed to be some three or four years younger. He was a handsome young man, with a rosy complexion, fair hair, light-blue eyes, a straight, firm nose, and a prominent but almost beardless chin. He was perhaps two inches taller than his companion; and though his figure was above the medium height, it was so admirably proportioned as a whole, so free in all its movements, that he was certain to be, if not extraordinarily strong, unusually agile and dexterous. Though dressed in the same manner as his companion, and apparently on a footing of equality, he showed a remarkable deference to the dark young man, which, as it could not result from age, was caused, no doubt, by some inferiority of position. For one thing, he called his companion Citizen, while the other called him Roland.

These remarks, which we make to initiate the reader into our tale, were probably not made to their full extent by the guests at the table d'hôte; for after giving a few moments' attention to the new guests, they turned their eyes away, and the conversation, interrupted for a moment, was

renewed. We must admit that it concerned a matter most interesting and important to travellers, — that of the stoppage of a diligence bearing a sum of sixty thousand francs belonging to the government. This affair had taken place the evening before on the road from Marseille to Avignon, between Lambesc and Pont-Royal.

At the first words that were said of the event the two young men listened attentively, with evident interest. The robbery had taken place on the road they had just taken, and the person who told of it was an actor in the scene, the wine-merchant from Bordeaux. Those who were the most curious to hear the particulars of the affair were the occupants of the diligence which had just come, and was soon to depart. The other guests, those who belonged to the locality, seemed sufficiently accustomed to such catastrophes to be able to give certain details themselves, instead of listening to them.

"So, citizen," said a stout gentleman, against whom a tall woman, very thin and haggard, was leaning in terror, "you say that on the road by which we have just come this robbery took place?"

"Yes, citizen; between Lambesc and Pont-Royal. Did you notice a place where the road ascends between high banks? — a great many rocks are there."

"Yes, yes, my dear," said the wife, clinging to her husband's arm, "I noticed them. I said, don't you remember? 'This is a bad place; I am glad we are here by day rather than by night.'"

"Oh, madame," said a young man, who affected to slur his *r's* after the fashion of the day, and who probably on ordinary occasions assumed to lead the conversation of the table d'hôte, "The Company of Jehu pay no attention to night or day."

"What!" exclaimed the lady, still more alarmed, and turning to the wine-merchant. "Did this thing happen to you in broad daylight?"

"Yes, in broad daylight; at ten o'clock in the morning."

"How many were there?" asked the stout gentleman.

"Four, citizen."

"Hidden beside the road?"

"No; they came on horseback, armed to the teeth and masked."

"That 's their way," said the table d'hôte young man; "and they said, did n't they? 'Don't defend yourselves; no harm will happen to you. We only want the government money.'"

"Word for word, citizen."

"And then," continued this well-informed young man, "two got off their horses, flinging the bridles to their companions, and summoned the conductor to deliver up the money?"

"Citizen," said the wine-merchant, amazed, "you relate the thing as if you had seen it."

"Perhaps monsieur was there," said one of the travellers, half in jest and half in earnest.

"I don't know, citizen, whether in saying that you intend a rudeness," said the young man, carelessly; "but my political opinions are such that I do not regard your suspicion as an insult. If I had had the misfortune to be one of those attacked, or the honor to belong to those who made the attack, I should tell it as frankly in the one case as in the other. But yesterday, at ten o'clock, just as the diligence was stopped twelve miles from here, I was quietly breakfasting at this very table, and, by the bye, with the two gentlemen who do me the honor to sit beside me now."

"And pray," said the younger of the two travellers who had lately arrived, and who was called by his companion Roland, "how many men were you in the diligence?"

"Let me think; we were, — yes, that 's it, — we were seven men and three women."

"Seven men, not including the conductor?" repeated Roland.

"Yes."

"And being seven men, you let four bandits rob the coach? I congratulate you, gentlemen."

"We knew with whom we had to deal," replied the wine-merchant; "and we took good care not to defend ourselves."

"With whom you had to deal!" exclaimed the young man. "Why, you had to deal, it seems to me, with thieves, with bandits."

"Not at all; they told us who they were."

"They told you that?"

"They said, 'Gentlemen, it is useless to defend yourselves. Ladies, do not be alarmed, we are not brigands; we belong to The Company of Jehu.'"

"Yes," said the table d'hôte young man; "they warned you that there might be no mistake. They always do that."

"Good heavens!" cried Roland; "who and what is this Jehu who has such polite companions? Is he their captain?"

"Monsieur," said a man, whose dress was somewhat that of a secularized priest, and who seemed to be not only an habitual guest at the table d'hôte, but also an initiate into the mysteries of the honorable company whose merits were then under discussion, "if you were better versed than you seem to be in Holy Scripture you would know that Jehu has been dead some twenty-six hundred years, and, consequently, that he cannot at the present time stop coaches on the highway."

"Monsieur l'abbé," replied Roland, who recognized an ecclesiastic, "as, in spite of the sharp tone in which you speak, I see you are a man of education, permit an ignoramus like myself to ask for a few details about this Jehu who has been dead for two thousand six hundred years, but who, nevertheless, is honored by a company which bears his name."

"Jehu," replied the churchman, in the same sour tone, "was a king of Israel, anointed by Elisha on condition that he would punish the crimes of the house of Ahab and of Jezebel and put to death the priests of Baal."

"Monsieur l'abbé," said the young man, laughing, "I thank you for the explanation. I don't doubt it is correct, and, above all, very learned; only, I must admit that it does not tell me much."

"How is that, citizen?" returned the abbé; "do you not see that Jehu is his Majesty King Louis XVIII., anointed on condition that he shall punish the crimes of the Revolution and put to death the priests of Baal, — in other words, all those who have taken any part whatsoever in the abominable state of things which for the last seven years has been called the Republic?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the young man; "I see that. But among those whom The Company of Jehu are appointed to destroy do you reckon the brave soldiers who have driven back the enemies of France to the frontier, and the illustrious generals who have commanded the armies of Tyrol, of the Sambre-et-Meuse, and of Italy?"

"Undoubtedly, — they first of all, before all."

The eyes of the young man darted lightning; his nostrils dilated, his lips tightened. He rose from his chair; but his companion pulled him by the coat and made him sit down again, while with a single glance he silenced him.

Then the man who had shown this proof of his power spoke for the first time.

"Citizen," he said, addressing himself to the young man of the table d'hôte, "excuse two travellers who have just arrived from the ends of the earth, as we may call America and India. We have been away from France two years, and are totally ignorant of what is happening here, and very desirous to obtain information."

"Why, certainly," said the young man to whom these words were addressed; "that is only fair, citizen. Ask any question you please, and you shall be answered."

"Well, then," continued the dark young man with the eagle eye, the straight black hair, and the granite complexion, "now that I know who Jehu is and why his

Company was instituted, I would like to know what his companions do with the money they obtain."

"Oh, that 's easily answered, citizen. You know there is much talk of the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy?"

"No, I did not know it," said the dark young man, in a tone which he vainly endeavored to render artless. "I have just arrived, as I told you, from the ends of the earth."

"What! you really did not know that? Six months hence it will be an accomplished fact."

"Really?"

"Yes. I have the honor to tell you so, citizen."

The two young travellers, whose appearance was military, exchanged a glance and a smile, though the younger of the two seemed chafing under the weight of his impatience.

Their informant continued, "Lyon is the headquarters of the conspiracy, — if, indeed, we can call conspiracy a plan which has been laid in open day; provisional government would be the better word."

"Well, then, citizen," said the dark young man, with a politeness that was not quite free from satire, "let us call it a provisional government."

"This provisional government has its staff and its armies — "

"Pooh! its staff, perhaps; but as to armies — "

"It has its armies, I repeat."

"Where are they?"

"One is organized in the mountains of Auvergne, under the orders of M. de Chardon; another in the Jura mountains, under the orders of M. Teyssonnet; and the third is acting, satisfactorily at the present time, in La Vendée, under d'Escarboville, Achille Leblond, and Georges Cadoudal."

"Really, citizen, you do me a great service in telling me this news. I thought the Bourbons were completely resigned to their exile; I supposed the police in a position to prevent royalist committees in the chief towns and ban-

dits on the highways. In short, I supposed La Vendée had been thoroughly pacificated by Hoche."

The young man to whom these remarks were addressed laughed heartily.

"Where do you come from?" he cried.

"I told you, citizen, from the ends of the earth."

"So I see." Then he added, "You must know that the Bourbons are not rich; the *émigrés*, whose property was confiscated and sold, are ruined. It is impossible to organize two armies and maintain a third without money. The royalist party were hampered. None but the Republic could pay its troops, and the quickest way was to take the Republic's money for that purpose."

"Ah! now I understand."

"That 's fortunate."

"The Company of Jehu is an intermediary between the Republic and the Counter Revolution, — the tax-gatherers of the royalist generals; is that it?"

"Yes. It is not robbery; it is a military operation. Such attacks are feats of arms like any other."

"But," said the wine-merchant, timidly, "if The Company of Jehu only want the money of the government — "

"The money of the government and no other; there is no instance in which they have taken the money of a private person."

"No instance?"

"No instance."

"How does it happen, then, that yesterday they carried off, in addition to the government money, two hundred louis of mine?"

"My dear sir," replied the table d'hôte young man, "I have told you already that there is some mistake about that. As surely as my name is Alfred de Barjols, the money will be returned to you some day or other."

The wine-merchant heaved a sigh and shook his head, as if in spite of that assurance, he kept his doubts.

But at that moment, as though the promise made by the

young noble who had just revealed his station by giving his name had been agreed upon, a horse was suddenly pulled up before the house, steps were heard in the corridor, the door of the dining-room opened, and a masked man, armed to the teeth, appeared on the threshold.

"Gentlemen," he said, in the hush caused by his apparition, "is there a traveller among you named Jean Picot, who was yesterday in the diligence which was stopped between Lambesc and Pont-Royal?"

"Yes," said the wine-merchant, amazed.

"Are you he?" asked the masked man.

"Yes, I am."

"Was anything taken from you?"

"Yes; two hundred louis which I had given in charge of the conductor."

"And I may add," said the young noble, "that monsieur was in the act of speaking of his loss. He thought the money lost."

"Monsieur was mistaken," said the masked man. "We make war upon the government, and not on individuals; we are partisans, not robbers. Here are your two hundred louis, monsieur; and if anything of the kind happens again, claim your loss and give the name of Morgan."

So saying, the masked individual laid a bag of gold beside the wine-merchant, bowed courteously to the other guests, and went out, leaving some terrified and others bewildered by such daring.

II.

AN ITALIAN PROVERB.

Now, although the two sentiments which we have just indicated were the dominant ones among those present, they did not manifest themselves to an equal degree in all. Shades of both sentiments were graduated according to the age, the character, and, we may say, the social position of the individual. The wine-merchant, Jean Picot, the principal person concerned in the late event, recognizing at first sight, by the dress, weapons, and mask, one of the men who had stopped the coach, was for a moment stupefied; then, little by little, as he saw the purpose of the visit made to him by the mysterious bandit, he passed from stupefaction to joy, through all the phases that separate those two emotions. His bag of gold was beside him; but he seemed not to dare to touch it. Perhaps he feared that the instant he did so it would vanish like the gold of a dream which melts away during that period of progressive lucidity which comes between sleep and thorough waking.

The stout gentleman and his wife had shown, like the rest of their companions in the diligence, the most complete and undisguised terror. The husband was seated on the left of Jean Picot; and when the bandit approached the latter, he hastily, in the vain hope of maintaining a safe distance between himself and the Companion of Jehu, pushed back his chair against that of his wife, who, yielding to the pressure, endeavored to push back hers. But as the chair that came next was that of citizen Alfred de Barjols, who had no reason at all to fear the men he had lately praised, the chair of the stout gentleman's wife

encountered an obstacle in the immovability of that of the young noble; so — just as it happened at Marengo, eight or nine months later, when the general-in-chief thought it time to renew the offensive — the retrograde movement was arrested.

As for him (we are speaking now of citizen Alfred de Barjols), his attitude, also that of the abbé, who had given the Biblical explanation about Jehu, king of Israel, and his mission from Elisha, was that of a man who feels no fear, and even expects the event that happens, however unexpected that event may be. A smile was on his lips as he watched the masked man; and if the other guests had not been so preoccupied by their fears, they might have seen an almost imperceptible sign exchanged between the eyes of the bandit and the young noble, and instantly transmitted by the latter to the abbé.

The two travellers whom we ourselves introduced to the table d'hôte, and who, as we have said, sat apart at the end of the table, preserved the attitude natural to their respective characters. The younger had instinctively put his hand to his side as if to grasp an absent weapon, and had risen with a spring as if to rush at the throat of the masked man, which he would certainly have done had he been alone; but the elder, he who seemed to have not only the habit but the right to command the younger, pulled him as before by the coat, saying in an imperious, almost harsh tone: —

"Sit down, Roland."

And the young man sat down.

But there was one among the guests who had remained, in appearance at least, impassable during the scene which had just taken place. He was a man thirty-three or thirty-four years of age, blond in hair, red of beard, calm and handsome in face, with large blue eyes, a fair skin, refined and intelligent lips, very tall, and speaking with a foreign accent which betrayed him to be a man born in an island the government of which was at that time making

bitter war against France. As far as could be judged from the few words he uttered, he spoke the French language, in spite of the accent we mention, with rare purity. At the first word he said, in which his English accent showed itself, the elder of the two travellers started. Turning to his companion, he seemed to ask with a glance how it was that an Englishman should be in France at a time when the war between the two nations would naturally keep the English out of France as it kept the French out of England. No doubt the explanation seemed impossible to Roland; for he shrugged his shoulders, and answered with his eyes, "It is quite as extraordinary to me as it is to you; but if you can't find the solution to the problem, mathematician that you are, don't ask me."

It was quite plain to both the young men that the fair man with the Anglo-Saxon accent was the traveller whose comfortable travelling-carriage was waiting with the horses harnessed in the courtyard, and that this traveller came from London, or, at any rate, from one of the counties of Great Britain. As to what he said, his words, as we have already stated, were rare, — so rare that in reality they were more exclamations than speech. But every now and then he asked some explanation on the state of France, and as he did so the Englishman openly took out a note-book and requested those about him — the wine-merchant, the abbé, the young noble — to repeat their words; which they each did with an amiability equal to the courteous tone of the request. In this way he had taken notes of all the most important, extraordinary, and picturesque features of the stoppage of the diligence, the state of La Vendée, and the nature of The Company of Jehu, thanking each informant by voice and gesture with the stiffness characteristic of our insular neighbors, returning his note-book, enriched each time by some new fact, to a side pocket in his overcoat.

Finally, like a spectator enjoying some startling scene, he gave a cry of satisfaction on seeing the masked man; he

listened with all his ears and gazed with all his eyes and never lost him from sight until the door closed behind him. Then, pulling his note-book from his pocket, —

"Oh, monsieur," he said to his neighbor, who was no other than the abbé, "would you be so kind as to repeat to me, word for word, what was said by that gentleman who has just gone out?"

He began at once to write, and the abbé's memory agreeing with his own, he had the satisfaction of transcribing in all its integrity the speech addressed by the Companion of Jehu to the citizen Jean Picot. Then, when that was written down, he exclaimed, with an accent which gave a singular stamp of originality to his words: —

"Ah! it is only in France that such things can happen; France is the most curious country in the world. I am delighted, gentlemen, to travel in France and know Frenchmen."

The last sentence was said with such courtesy that nothing could be done after it had issued from that serious mouth but to thank the speaker, albeit he was a descendant of the conquerors at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. It was the younger of the two travellers who answered the Englishman's politeness in words; and he did so with the careless and rather caustic manner which seemed habitual to him: —

"Upon my word, I 'm exactly like you, my lord. I say 'my lord,' for I presume you are an Englishman."

"Yes, monsieur," replied the other; "I have that honor."

"Well, as I was saying," continued the young man, "I am, like you, delighted to travel in France and see what I am seeing. One must live under the government of citizens Gohier, Moulins, Roger Ducos, Sieyès, and Barras to see such foolery. I am willing to bet that fifty years hence, if some one relates that in a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, in broad day, a highway robber came, masked, armed to the teeth, and returned to an honest merchant two hun-

dred louis he had robbed him of the night before; and if he adds that this happened at a dinner-table where twenty or twenty-five persons were seated, and that this model bandit departed, and not one of those twenty or twenty-five persons took him by the throat, I am willing, I say, to bet that whoever has the audacity to tell the story will be branded as an infamous liar."

And the young man, throwing himself back in his chair, burst out laughing in a loud and aggressive manner.

"Monsieur," said the citizen Alfred de Barjols, "permit me to observe that that man you have just seen is not a highway robber."

"What is he then?"

"Probably he is a young man of as good a family as yours or mine."

"Count Horn, whom the regent ordered to be broken on the wheel in the place de Grève, was also a young man of good family, which is proved by all the nobles in Paris sending their carriages to his funeral.

"Count Horn, if I mistake not, murdered a Jew to rob him of a note of hand which he could not pay. No one will dare say that a Companion of Jehu has ever so much as hurt the hair of an infant."

"Well, be it so; let us admit that the Company was founded for philanthropic purposes, — to re-establish the balance of fortunes, redress the tricks of chance, reform the abuses of society. He may be a thief after the pattern of Karl Moor, but your friend Morgan — Was n't Morgan the name by which that worthy citizen called himself?"

"Yes," said the Englishman.

" — your friend Morgan is none the less a thief."

Citizen Alfred de Barjols turned very pale.

"The citizen Morgan is not my friend," said the young aristocrat; "but if he were, I should feel myself honored by his friendship."

"No doubt," replied Roland with a laugh. "As M. de

Voltaire says, 'The friendship of a great man is a blessing from the gods.'"

"Roland, Roland!" said his companion in a low voice.

"Oh, general!" replied the other, letting the rank of his companion escape him, perhaps intentionally, "do let me, I implore you, continue a discussion which interests me immensely."

The elder man shrugged his shoulders.

"I desire, citizen," continued the young man, with strange persistence, "to gain information. It is two years since I left France, and during my absence such changes have taken place in manners and customs, clothes, tones, and accents, that perhaps the language has changed too. What do you call, in the language you are now speaking in France, stopping mail-coaches and taking the money they contain?"

"Monsieur," replied the young noble in the tone of a man who is determined to carry a discussion to its end, "I call that making war. Here is your companion, whom you have just called general; he will tell you, as a military man, that, apart from the pleasure of killing and being killed, the generals of all time have never done anything else than what the citizen Morgan is doing now."

"What!" cried the young man, his eyes darting fire, "do you dare compare —"

"Let that gentleman develop his theory, Roland," said the dark traveller, whose eyes, the reverse of those of his companion, which dilated as they flamed, were veiled by their long black lashes so as to conceal all that was passing in his mind.

"Ah!" said the young man, in his curt tone, "you see you are beginning to take an interest in the discussion yourself." Then, turning to the citizen de Barjols, whom he seemed to have selected for his antagonist, he added, "Go on, monsieur; the general permits it."

The young noble reddened as visibly as he had paled a moment earlier; then, with his teeth clenched, his elbow

on the table, his chin on his fist, as if to thrust himself as near as possible to his adversary, he said, with a Provençal accent, which grew more marked as he went on: —

"Since *the general permits,*" emphasizing the word "general," "I shall have the honor to say to him, and therefore to you, citizen, that I think I have read in Plutarch that Alexander the Great when he started for India took with him only eighteen or twenty talents of gold, — something like one hundred or one hundred and twenty thousand francs. Now do you suppose that it was with such a sum as that that he fed his army, won the battle of Granicus, subdued Asia Minor, conquered Tyre, Syria, Egypt, built Alexandria, penetrated to Libya, had himself declared son of Jupiter by the oracle of Ammon, forced his way to Hyphases, and, when his soldiers refused to follow him farther, returned to Babylon, to surpass in luxury, debauchery, and self-indulgence the most luxurious, the most debauched, the most voluptuous of the kings of Asia? Did he get his money from Macedonia? Do you think that Philip, the most poverty-stricken king in that poor Greece, honored the checks that his son drew upon him? No; Alexander did as the citizen Morgan is doing, — only, instead of stopping coaches on the high road, he pillaged cities, held kings for ransom, raised supplies from the countries through which he passed. Let us turn to Hannibal. You know how he left Carthage, of course. He had n't even the twenty talents in gold of his predecessor Alexander; and as he wanted money quite as badly, he took and sacked, in the midst of peace and in defiance of treaties, the town of Saguntum. After that he was rich and could open his campaign. This time I am not quoting Plutarch, but Cornelius Nepos. I will say nothing of his descent from the Pyrenees and his crossing of the Alps, nor of the three battles he won, seizing after each the treasure of the vanquished; but I come to the five or six years he spent in Campania. Do you believe that he and his army paid the Capuans for their subsistence, and that the bankers

of Carthage, with whom he had quarrelled, sent him the means of doing so? No; war fed war, — the Morgan system. Pass on to Cæsar. Ah, Cæsar! that 's another thing. He started from Spain with some thirty million of debt, and returned with about the same; started again for Gaul, remained ten years with our ancestors, and during those ten years sent over one hundred millions to Rome; repassed the Alps, crossed the Rubicon, marched straight to the Capitol, forced the gates of the temple of Saturn, where the Treasury was, took all he wanted for his private needs (not for those of the Republic), three thousand pounds' weight of gold in ingots, and died, — he whom his creditors twenty years earlier would not allow to leave his little house in the Suburra street, — he died, leaving two or three thousand sesterces per head to the citizens, ten or twelve millions to Calpurnia, thirty or forty millions to Octavius, — still the Morgan system, except that Morgan, I am very sure, would die sooner than put into his own pocket any of the silver of the Gauls or the gold of the Capitol. Now, let us spring over eighteen centuries and come down to General Buonaparté — "

And the young aristocrat, after the manner of those who were enemies to the conqueror of Italy, affected to dwell upon the *u*, which Bonaparte had dropped from his name, and on the *e* from which he had removed the accent.

This affectation seemed to irritate Roland, who made a movement as if to spring forward; but again his companion stopped him.

"Let be, let be, Roland," he said; "I am sure that the citizen Barjols will not say that General Buonaparté, as he calls him, is a thief."

"No, I shall not say it; but there is an Italian proverb which says it for me."

"What is that?" asked the general, fixing his limpid, calm, clear eye on the speaker.

"I give it in all its simplicity, — 'Francesi non sono tutti ladroni, ma buona parte;' which means, 'All Frenchmen are not thieves but — ' "

"'A good part are'?" said Roland.

"Yes, 'Buonaparté,'" replied Alfred de Barjols.

The insolent speech had scarcely left the lips of the young aristocrat before the plate with which Roland was playing flew from his hands and struck de Barjols full in the face. The women screamed; the men rose. Roland burst out laughing in the nervous manner that was habitual to him, and threw himself back in his chair. The young aristocrat was perfectly calm, though the blood was trickling from his eyebrow to his cheek.

At this instant the conductor of the diligence entered the room and said, in the usual formula: —

"Come, citizens, take your places."

The travellers, anxious to get away from the scene of the quarrel, rushed to the door.

"Pardon me, monsieur," said Alfred de Barjols to Roland; "you do not belong to the diligence, I hope?"

"No, monsieur; I came in a post-chaise. But don't be uneasy; I shall not leave the inn."

"Nor I," said the Englishman. "Tell them to unharness the horses; I remain here."

"I must go," said the dark young man, whom Roland had called general, with a sigh. "You know, my dear friend, that I must go, that my presence is absolutely necessary over there. But I swear that nothing would induce me to leave you if I could possibly do otherwise."

In saying these words, his voice betrayed an emotion which its usual hard and metallic quality seemed incapable of rendering. Roland, on the contrary, was gay and indifferent.

"Oh, no matter, general," he said; "we were to part in any case at Lyon, as you have had the kindness to give me a month's leave of absence to visit my family at Bourg. It is only a hundred and sixty miles or so less than we meant to be together. I 'll rejoin you in Paris. But you know that if at any moment you want a devoted arm and a heart that never sulks, you must send for me."

"Make yourself easy about that, Roland," said the general. Then looking attentively at the two adversaries, he added in a tone of indescribable tenderness, "Above all, Roland, don't let yourself be killed; but also, if it is a possible thing, don't kill your adversary. He strikes me as a gallant man. The day will come when I shall want such men on my side."

"I 'll do my best, general, for your sake."

At this moment the landlord appeared on the threshold of the door. "The carriage is ready," he said.

The general took his hat and cane, which he had laid on a chair. Roland, on the contrary, followed him bareheaded, that it might be seen by all that he did not intend to accompany his friend. Alfred de Barjols, therefore, made no opposition to his leaving the room. Besides, it was quite evident that his antagonist was of those who make quarrels, not of those who avoid them.

The general got into the carriage, and as he sat down he said, "I cannot help it; my heart is heavy in leaving you thus, Roland, without a friend to serve as second."

"Oh! don't be uneasy about that, general; there is never any lack of seconds. There are, and always will be men who are curious to see how one man can kill another."

"Till we meet again, then, Roland, — observe, I don't say farewell; I say till we meet again."

"Yes, my dear general," replied Roland, in a voice that showed some feeling. "I understand you perfectly, and I thank you."

"Promise to send me a letter the moment the affair is over. If you cannot write yourself, get some one to write for you."

"Oh, don't be alarmed, general; you shall have a letter from myself in less than four days," answered Roland.

"Good! One word more; try to find out one thing."

"What is that, general?"

"How it happens that while we are at war with England an Englishman stalks about France as freely and easily as if he were at home."

"I will find it out."

"How?"

"That I don't know; but if I promise you to find it out, I will find it out, if I have to ask him, himself."

"Reckless fellow! don't get into another affair in that direction."

"If I do, it won't be a duel. He 's a national enemy; it will be a battle."

"Well, once more, till I see you again. Kiss me."

Roland flung himself with an impulse of gratitude upon the breast of the man who had given him this permission.

The general looked at him with profound affection.

"Au revoir," he said; "have you any commissions for Paris?"

"Yes, three: my regards to Bourrienne, my respects to your brother Lucien, and my most tender homage to Madame Bonaparte."

"I will attend to all."

"Where shall I find you in Paris?"

"At my house in the rue de la Victoire; possibly —"

"Possibly?"

"Who knows? Possibly at the Luxembourg!" Then, flinging himself back in the carriage, as if he regretted having said as much even to the man he regarded as his best friend, he called to the postilion: —

"Road to Orange, and as fast as possible."

The postilion, who was only waiting for the word, whipped his horses; the carriage started rapidly, rumbling like thunder, and disappeared through the Porte d'Oulle.

III.

THE ENGLISHMAN.

Roland remained motionless, not only as long as he could see the carriage, but long after it had disappeared. Then, shaking his head as if to get rid of the cloud that darkened his brow, he re-entered the inn and asked for a room.

"Show monsieur into number three," said the landlord to a chambermaid.

The woman took a key hanging from a large black wooden board, on which were ranged the numbers painted white in two lines, and signed to the young traveller to follow her.

"Have the goodness to send me up some paper and pens and ink," he said to the landlord; "and if M. de Barjols asks where I am, tell him the number of my room."

The landlord promised to obey these injunctions, and Roland followed the maid upstairs, whistling the Marseillaise. Five minutes later he was seated at a table with pens and paper before him, making ready to write. But just as he had written the first line some one rapped three times on the door.

"Come in," he said, twirling his chair round on one of its hind legs so as to face his visitor, whom he supposed to be either M. de Barjols or one of his friends.

The door opened, and the Englishman appeared.

"Ah!" cried Roland, enchanted at the visit, as he recalled the request the general had made of him; "is it you?"

"Yes," said the Englishman; "it is I."

"You are very welcome."

"Oh! if I am welcome then it is all right. I was not sure that I ought to come."

"Why not?"

"On account of Aboukir."

Roland began to laugh.

"There were two battles of Aboukir," he said, "one of which we lost, the other we gained."

"I meant the one you lost."

"Pooh!" said Roland, "we fight and kill and exterminate each other on the field of battle; but that need n't prevent us from shaking hands on neutral ground. I repeat, therefore, you are very welcome, especially if you will kindly tell me why you have come."

"Thank you; but, in the first place, read this."

And the Englishman drew a paper from his pocket.

"What is this?" asked Roland.

"My credentials."

"But what have I to do with your credentials?" asked Roland; "I am not a gendarme."

"No; but as I have come here to offer you my services, perhaps you will not accept them unless you know who I am."

"Your services, monsieur?"

"Yes; but read that first."

Roland read: —

In the name of the French Republic:

The Executive Directory hereby orders that help and protection in case of need, and freedom to travel where he pleases, shall be given to Sir John Tanlay throughout the territory of the Republic.

(Signed) FOUCHÉ.

And lower down: —

To whom it may concern:

I particularly recommend Sir John Tanlay as a philanthropist and a friend of liberty.

(Signed) BARRAS.

"Have you read it?"

"Yes, I have read it; what else?"

"What else? My father did many services to M. Barras; that is why M. Barras lets me roam about France. And I am very well pleased to roam about France; it amuses me much."

"Yes, I remember, Sir John; you did us the honor to say that at table."

"I did say it; it is true. I also said that I am very fond of the French."

Roland bowed.

"Above all, General Bonaparte," continued Sir John.

"You like General Bonaparte very much?"

"I admire him; he is a great, a very great man."

"By heavens! Sir John, I am sorry he is n't here to hear an Englishman say that."

"Oh, if he were here I should not say it."

"Why not?"

"I should not wish him to think I said such things to give him pleasure. I say so because that is my opinion."

"I don't doubt it," said Roland, who could not make out what the Englishman was aiming at, and who, having learned from the passport all that the general wanted to know, was now holding back on his guard.

"And when I heard you," continued the Englishman, with the same phlegm, "taking the side of General Bonaparte, I was pleased."

"Really?"

"Much pleased," said the Englishman, nodding his head affirmatively.

"So much the better."

"But when I saw you throw a plate at M. Alfred de Barjols' head I was grieved."

"Grieved? And why?"

"Because in England a gentleman never throws a plate at the head of another gentleman."

"Monsieur," said Roland, rising and frowning, "have you come here to read me a lesson?"

"Oh, no; I came to say that perhaps you are embarrassed about finding a second."

"Faith! Sir John, I am willing to admit that just as you knocked at the door I was wondering whom I could ask to do me that service."

"I will, if you like," said the Englishman. "I will be your second."

"I accept," cried Roland, "with all my heart."

"That is the service I came to offer."

Roland held out his hand. "Thank you," he said.

The Englishman bowed.

"Now," said Roland, "as you have had the good taste, Sir John, to tell me who you are before offering me your services, it is only right that in accepting them I should tell you who I am."

"As you please."

"My name is Louis de Montrevel; I am aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte."

"Aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte! I am very glad of that."

"That explains to you why I took up, perhaps a little too warmly, the defence of my general."

"No, not too warmly; only, — the plate, you know."

"Oh! I know I might have done it without the plate; but I couldn't help it. I had my hand on the plate, and I flung it at M. de Barjols; it went off of itself without any will of mine."

"You will not tell him that, will you?"

"Certainly not. I only tell it to you to set your mind at rest."

"Very good; then you will fight him?"

"I have stayed here for that, at any rate."

"What weapon?"

"That is not our affair, Sir John."

"How do you mean; not our affair?"

"No; M. de Barjols is the one insulted. He has the choice of weapons."

"Then shall you accept the one he proposes?"

"I shall not, Sir John; but you will, in my name. I

don't know if that is how you do in England, but in France the principals take no part in the matter. The seconds manage everything. What they do is always considered right."

"Then whatever I do will satisfy you?"

"Perfectly."

The Englishman bowed.

"What day and what hour?" he asked.

"Oh, as soon as possible. It is two years since I have seen my family, and I own to you I 'm in a hurry to get to them."

The Englishman looked at Roland with a sort of astonishment; he spoke with such assurance, as if he were certain of not being killed. At that instant a rap was made on the door, and the voice of the innkeeper was heard asking, "Can I come in?"

Roland answered affirmatively. The door opened, and the landlord entered, holding in his hand a card, which he gave to his guest. The young man took the card and read, "Charles de Valensolle."

"From M. de Barjols," said the landlord.

"Very good," replied Roland. Then, passing the card to the Englishman, he said, "That concerns you; it is unnecessary that I should see the gentleman. M. de Valensolle is M. de Barjols' second; you are mine. Arrange the affair between you. Only," added the young man, pressing the Englishman's hand and looking at him fixedly, "let it all be done seriously. I shall object to what you do if there is no chance of death on either side."

"Don't be anxious," said the Englishman. "I will act for you as for myself."

"That is all right. Go now, and when you have settled everything, come back. I shall not stir from this room."

Sir John followed the innkeeper. Roland sat down again, twirled his chair back to the table, took up his pen, and began to write.

When Sir John returned Roland had written and sealed

two letters and was writing the address on a third. He signed to the Englishman to wait until he had finished, that he might give him his full attention. Then he concluded the address, sealed the letter, and turned round.

"Well," he said, "is it all arranged?"

"Yes," said the Englishman; "it was an easy matter. You have to do with a true gentleman."

"So much the better," remarked Roland, waiting.

"You will fight two hours hence by the fountain of Vaucluse, — an excellent place, — with pistols, advancing to each other, each firing as he pleases and continuing to advance after the fire of his adversary."

"Faith, you 're right, Sir John; that 's well managed. Did you arrange it?"

"I and M. de Barjols' second. Your adversary has renounced his rights as the insulted party."

"Are the weapons chosen?"

"I offered my pistols. They were accepted on my word of honor that neither you nor M. de Barjols had ever seen them. They are excellent weapons; I can cut a bullet on a knife-blade with them at twenty paces."

"Heavens! you are a practised hand, then, Sir John?"

"Yes; they say I am the best shot in England."

"I am glad to know it. When I want to be killed I 'll quarrel with you."

"No, don't do that," said the Englishman; "it would pain me very much to have to fight you."

"I 'll try to spare you that grief. So, then, at two o'clock, you say?"

"Yes; you said you were in a hurry."

"Precisely; how far is it to the place?"

"From here to Vaucluse?"

"Yes."

"About twelve miles."

"It will take an hour and a half to get there; we have no time to lose. Now let us get rid of all the troublesome matters, and have nothing before us but the pleasure."

The Englishman looked at the young man in astonishment. Roland seemed to pay no attention to the look.

"Here are three letters," he said, — "one for Madame de Montrevel, my mother; another for Mademoiselle de Montrevel, my sister; the third for citizen Bonaparte, my general. If I am killed you will simply put them into the post. Is that too much trouble?"

"If such a misfortune should happen, I shall take the letters myself," said the Englishman. "Where do Madame de Montrevel and your sister live?"

"At Bourg, the capital of the department of the Ain."

"That is very near here," said the Englishman. "As for General Bonaparte, I 'll follow him, if necessary, to Egypt. I should much like to see General Bonaparte."

"If you will, as you say, Sir John, take the trouble to carry the letter yourself, you will not have such a distance to go. Within three days General Bonaparte will be in Paris."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Englishman, but without showing the least surprise; "you think so?"

"I am sure of it," replied Roland.

"He is certainly a very extraordinary man, your General Bonaparte. Now, have you any other request to make of me, Monsieur de Montrevel?"

"Only one, Sir John."

"Oh, as many as you like!"

"Thank you, no, only one. If I am killed," continued Roland, "for, after all, one ought to prepare for everything, you will send my body to my mother, — unless, indeed, you prefer to throw it into the Rhone, which I leave to your discretion —"

"It will be no more trouble," interrupted the Englishman, "to take your coffin than your letter."

"Ah, Sir John, you 're a capital fellow!" cried Roland, laughing loudly. "It was Providence in person who brought us together. Come, let us start!"

They left the room which Roland occupied; that of Sir

John was on the same floor. Roland waited till the Englishman went in and fetched his pistols. He came out presently with the box in his hand.

"Now," said Roland, "how shall we go to Vaucluse, — on horseback or in a carriage?"

"In a carriage, if you are willing; it is more convenient in case of being wounded. Mine is in waiting now."

"I thought you told them to unharness."

"I gave the order; but I afterward sent for the postilion and countermanded it."

They went downstairs.

"Tom!" called Sir John, as they reached the door, where a servant in the stiff livery of an English groom was waiting, "take charge of that box."

"Am I to go with you, Sir John?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied Sir John.

Then, showing Roland the steps of the carriage, which the servant let down, he said: —

"Come, Monsieur de Montrevel."

Roland got into the carriage and stretched himself out luxuriously.

"Upon my word," he said, "it takes an Englishman to understand what the comfort of travelling-carriages ought to be; this is like being in one's bed. I will bet you pad your coffins before getting into them."

"Yes, that is true," answered Sir John; "the English understand comfort; but the French are a much more curious people — and more amusing. Postilion, to Vaucluse."

IV.

THE DUEL.

The road was passable only from Avignon to l'Isle. They did the nine miles between the two places in an hour. At the village of l'Isle they were obliged to leave the carriage. On making inquiries they found they were the first to arrive; and they immediately took the path which led to the fountain of Vaucluse.

"Oh! oh!" cried Roland; "there ought to be a good echo here;" and he gave two or three cries, to which the echo replied with much amiability.

"Upon my word," said the young man, "that is a wonderful echo! There is none that I know of except that of the Seinonnetta at Milan, to compare with it. Listen, Sir John."

And he began, with modulations which showed an admirable voice and an excellent method, to sing a Tyrolese air, which seemed a defiance of rebellious music to the human throat. Sir John looked at the young man and listened with an astonishment he did not give himself the trouble to conceal. When the last note had died away among the cavities of the mountain, he cried out, "God damn me! I do believe your liver is out of order."

Roland looked at him; but seeing that Sir John intended to say no more, he asked: —

"What makes you think that?"

"You are too noisily gay not to be deeply melancholy."

"And that anomaly surprises you?"

"No, nothing surprises me. But hush! here come the others."

As Sir John spoke, the forms of three persons were seen, coming along the same rough and rocky path they themselves had just taken. Roland counted them. "Three!" he said; "why three, when we are but two?"

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," replied Sir John, "that M. de Barjols, as much in your interest as for his own, asked permission to bring a surgeon, — one of his friends."

"What for?" asked Roland, frowning.

"Why, in case either of you are wounded; it often saves a man's life to bleed him immediately."

"Sir John," said Roland, "I don't understand such delicacies in the matter of a duel. If men fight they fight to kill. They can be as polite as they please beforehand, as your ancestors and mine were at Fontenoy, — that 's all very well; but when swords are once unsheathed or pistols loaded, the life of one or the other of them ought to pay for the trouble they have taken and the heart-beats they have lost."

The Englishman again looked curiously at the young man. Meantime, the three new-comers had approached within speaking distance. They bowed to the two gentlemen. Roland, with a smile on his lips which just disclosed his beautiful white teeth, returned their bow. Sir John came near enough to say in his ear: —

"You are not needed; go up that path toward the fountain. I will call you when we are ready."

"Ah, that 's a good idea!" said Roland. "I have always wanted to see that famous fountain of Vaucluse, the Hippocrene of Plutarch. You know the sonnet? —

'Chiari, fresche e dolci acque
Ove le belle membra
Pose colei, che sola a me perdona.'

If I lose this occasion, I may never have another. Which way is it?"

"Not a hundred feet off. Take that path; you 'll find it at the turn, at the foot of that immense rock you see there."

"Sir John, you are a capital guide; thank you."

And, with a friendly wave of the hand, he went off in the direction of the fountain, singing under his breath the pretty pastoral of Desportes: —

"Rosette, a little absence
Has turned thine heart from me;
I, knowing that inconstance,
Have turned my heart from thee.
No wayward beauty o'er me
Such power shall obtain;
We 'll see, my fickle lassie,
Who first will turn again."

Sir John turned away as he heard the modulations of that voice, so fresh and tender, which in its higher notes had something of a feminine quality. His cold, methodical mind could understand nothing of this nervous fitful nature, except that he had there, under his eyes, one of the most amazing organizations he had ever met with.

The other young men awaited him; the surgeon stood a little apart. Sir John carried the box of pistols in his hand. He laid it on a rock with a flat top, drew from his pocket a key which seemed made by a jeweller rather than a locksmith, and opened the box. The weapons were magnificent, though of great simplicity. They came from the manufactory of Manton, the grandfather of the man who is still the best gunsmith in London. Sir John Tanlay gave them to M. de Barjols' second for examination. M. de Valensolle tried the triggers, pushed the locks forward and back, and looked to see if the weapons were double-barrelled. They were single-barrelled. M. de Barjols cast his eye upon them, but did not touch them.

"Our opponent does not know these weapons?" asked M. de Valensolle.

"He has not even seen them," replied Sir John. "I give you my word of honor."

"Oh!" said M. de Valensolle, "a simple denial was enough."

The terms of the duel were gone over a second time, that there might be no misunderstanding. Then, all conditions being agreed to, the pistols were loaded, so as not to lose time in useless preparations. They were then replaced in the box, the box given to the surgeon, and Sir John, with the key in his pocket, went to call Roland.

He found him talking to a little shepherd-boy who was watching three goats on the steep, rocky slope of the mountain, and throwing stones into the fountain. Sir John opened his lips to tell Roland that all was ready, but the latter, without giving him time to speak, exclaimed: —

"You have no idea what this child has been telling me. A perfect Rhine legend! He says that this pool, the depth of which is not known, extends some six or eight miles under the mountain; and a fairy lives in it, half woman, half snake, who glides upon the surface of the water in the calm summer nights, calling to the shepherds on the mountain, letting them see nothing more than her long hair and naked shoulders and her beautiful arms. The stupid hinds are caught by the semblance of a woman; they draw near. They make her a sign to come to them; but she, on the contrary, signs to them to go to her. The fools advance, taking no heed to their steps. Suddenly the earth falls away from their feet, the fairy opens her arms, clasps them, plunges below into her dripping palaces, and returns the next day to the surface alone. How the devil can these idiots of shepherd-boys know the tale that Virgil related in his noble verse to Augustus and Mecænas?"

He remained pensive a moment, with his eyes fixed on the azure depths; then turning to Sir John, he took him, all amazed at such mobility of mind, by the arm, and led him to where the others were awaiting them. They, during this time, had found a suitable piece of ground, — a little plateau hanging, as it were, from the side of the mountain, exposed to the western sun, on which was a ruined castle, now used by the shepherds as a refuge when

the mistral overtook them. A flat space about a hundred and fifty feet long and sixty wide, which might once have been the platform of the castle battery, was now to be the closing scene of this part of our drama.

"We are here, gentlemen," said Sir John.

"We are ready, gentlemen," replied M. de Valensolle.

"The principals will have the goodness to listen to the conditions," said Sir John. Then, addressing M. de Valensolle, he added, "Read them, monsieur. You are French, and I am a foreigner; you will explain them more clearly than I can."

"You are of those foreigners, monsieur, who teach the purity of our language to us poor dwellers in Provence; but since you so courteously invite me to speak, I obey you. Gentlemen," he continued, "it is agreed that you shall stand at forty paces; that you advance each toward the other; that each shall fire when he pleases; and, wounded, or not, shall have the right to advance after receiving his adversary's fire."

The two combatants bowed in sign of assent; and then, at the same moment, almost with one voice they said: —

"The pistols!"

Sir John pulled the little key from his pocket and opened the box. Then he approached M. de Barjols and offered it to him open. The latter wished to yield the choice of weapons to his adversary; but, with a wave of his hand, Roland refused, saying in a voice, the sweetness of which was almost feminine: —

"After you, M. de Barjols. I am told that although you are the insulted party, you have renounced all your advantages; the least I can do is to yield this one to you, — if, indeed, it is an advantage."

M. de Barjols insisted no longer, and took a pistol at random. Sir John offered the other to Roland, who took it, and without even looking at its mechanism, let the hand that held it hang at his side. During this time M. de Valensolle had measured forty paces. A cane was stuck in the ground as a point of departure.

"Will you measure after me?" he asked of Sir John.

"Needless, monsieur," replied the latter. "Monsieur de Montrevel and I rely entirely upon you."

M. de Valensolle planted another cane at the fortieth pace.

"Gentlemen," he said, "whenever you please."

Roland's antagonist was already at his post, hat and coat off. The surgeon and the seconds stood aside. Roland tossed off his hat and coat and placed himself forty paces from M. de Barjols, facing him. Both, one to right and one to left, cast a glance at the same horizon. Nothing was visible to Roland's right and to M. de Barjols' left except the rise of the overhanging mountain; but on the opposite side, that is to say, to the right of M. de Barjols and on Roland's left, the sight was very different.

The horizon was illimitable. In the foreground lay the plain with its ruddy soil pierced on all sides by rocks, like a Titan graveyard where the bones were pushing through the earth. In the middle distance was Avignon, with its girdle of walls and its vast palace, like a crouching lion, seeming to hold the panting city in its claws. Beyond Avignon, a luminous line, like a river of molten gold, defined the Rhone. On the other side of the Rhone rose, in a dark-blue vista, the chain of hills which separate Avignon from Nîmes and d'Uzès. Far, far in the distance, the sun, at which one of these two men was probably looking for the last time, sank slowly and majestically in an ocean of gold and purple.

The men themselves presented a singular contrast. One, with his black hair, his olive skin, his slender limbs, his sombre eye, was the type of that Southern race which counts among its ancestors Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Spaniards. The other, with his rosy complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, and soft hands dimpled like a woman's, was the type of that race of the temperate regions which reckons Gauls, Germans, and Normans among its forbears. If any one desired to magnify the interest of the situation

it would be easy to believe that it concerned something more than a combat between two men. It might be thought a duel of a people against a people, a race against a race, the South against the North.

Were these the thoughts that filled the mind of Roland and plunged him into a gloomy revery? Probably not. The fact is that at the moment when he seemed to have forgotten seconds, antagonist, and duel he was lost in contemplation of the splendid scene before him. M. de Barjols' voice aroused him from this poetic stupor.

"When you are ready, monsieur," he said, "I am."

Roland started.

"Pardon me, monsieur," he said, "for having kept you waiting; I am very absent-minded. I am ready now."

Then, with a smile on his lips and his hair just lifted by the breeze, taking no more precautions than he would for an ordinary walk, while his opponent took all that were usual in such a case, Roland advanced toward M. de Barjols.

Sir John's face, in spite of its ordinary impassibility, betrayed a deep anxiety. The distance between the adversaries lessened rapidly. M. de Barjols stopped first, took aim and fired when Roland was at ten paces from him. The ball lifted a curl of Roland's hair but did not touch him. He turned toward his second.

"Fire, fire, monsieur!" said both seconds together.

Monsieur de Barjols stood silent and motionless on the spot where he had fired.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," replied Roland, "but you will, I trust, permit me to be the judge of the time and manner of returning fire. After receiving M. de Barjols' shot I have a few words to say to him which I could not say earlier." Then bowing to the young aristocrat, who was pale and calm, he said, "Monsieur, perhaps I was too hasty in our discussion this morning —"

He waited.

"It is for you to fire, monsieur," replied M. de Barjols.

"But," continued Roland, as if he had not heard him, "you will understand the reason of my excitement and perhaps excuse it when I say that I am a soldier, and aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte."

"Fire, monsieur!" repeated the young noble.

"Say a single retracting word, monsieur," persisted Roland; "say that General Bonaparte's reputation for honor and delicacy is such that a miserable Italian proverb cannot hurt him. Say that, and I throw this pistol away to clasp your hand; for I see, monsieur, that you are a brave man."

"I shall not admit the honor and delicacy of which you speak, monsieur, until General Bonaparte uses the influence his genius gives him over France as Monk used his, — to reinstate his legitimate sovereign upon the throne."

"Ah!" cried Roland, with a smile; "that is asking too much of a Republican general."

"Then I maintain what I said," replied the young noble. "Fire, monsieur, fire!" Then, as Roland made no haste to obey him, "Heavens and earth!" he cried; "why don't you fire?"

At these words Roland made a movement as if to fire in the air.

"Ah!" cried M. de Barjols, "don't do that, I entreat you, or I shall insist that you begin again, and that you fire first."

"Upon my honor!" cried Roland, becoming as pale as if the blood had left his body, "this is the first time that I have done as much as this for any man. Go to the devil! and if you don't want to live, then die!"

So saying, he lowered his weapon and fired, without troubling himself to aim.

Alfred de Barjols put his hand to his breast, swayed forward and backward, turned half round, and fell with his face to the ground. Roland's ball had gone through his heart.

Sir John, as soon as M. de Barjols fell, went straight to

Roland and drew him to the spot where he had thrown his hat and coat.

"That is the third," muttered Roland, with a sigh; "but you are my witness that this one would have it."

Then, giving his smoking pistol to Sir John, he put on his hat and coat.

During this time M. de Valensolle picked up the other pistol which had fallen from his friend's hand; and he now brought it with the box to Sir John.

"Well?" said the Englishman, with a motion of his eyes toward Alfred de Barjols.

"He is dead," replied the second.

"Did I act as a man of honor, monsieur?" asked Roland, wiping from his face the sweat, which suddenly inundated it as he heard of his opponent's death.

"Yes, monsieur," replied M. de Valensolle; "only, allow me to say this: You have the fatal hand."

Bowing to Roland and his friend with perfect politeness, he returned to the body of his friend.

"And you, Sir John, what do you say?" asked Roland.

"I say," said Sir John, with a sort of forced admiration, "that you are one of those men who are made by the divine Shakspeare to say: —

> 'Danger and I, —
> We were two lions littered in one day,
> But I the elder.'"

V.

ROLAND.

When Roland and Sir John Tanlay returned to the hôtel du Palais-Royal, the latter went up to his room to put away his pistols, the sight of which might, he thought, excite something like remorse in Roland's breast. Then he rejoined the young officer and returned the three letters with which Roland had intrusted him. He found him sitting pensively, with his elbows on the table. Without saying a word, the Englishman laid the letters before him.

The young man cast his eyes on their addresses, took the one for his mother, unsealed it, and read it over. As he read, big tears rolled down his cheeks. Sir John gazed with fresh astonishment at this new aspect under which Roland now appeared to him. He could have thought all things possible to this many-sided nature except the shedding of tears, which were now flowing silently from the young man's eyes.

Shaking his head and paying not the slightest attention to Sir John's presence, Roland murmured: —

"Poor mother! poor mother! She would have wept for me. It is well it is as it is; mothers were not made to weep for their children."

He tore up the letters mechanically, and burned the fragments with extreme care. Then ringing for the chambermaid, he asked her, "At what hour must the letters be in the post?"

"By half-past six," she answered; "you have only a few minutes."

"Wait, then," he said.

Taking a pen he wrote, —

My dear General, — It is as I told you; I am living and he is dead. You must admit it has the appearance of winning a wager. Devotion to death.

Your paladin, Roland.

Then he sealed the letter, wrote the address, "General Bonaparte, rue de la Victoire, Paris," and gave it to the chambermaid, telling her not to lose a moment in putting it into the post. It was then that he seemed first to notice Sir John, and he held out his hand to him.

"You have just done me a great service," he said, — "one of those services which bind two men to each other for eternity. I am your friend; will you do me the honor of being mine?"

Sir John pressed the hand that Roland held out to him.

"Oh!" he said; "I thank you very much. I should never have asked that honor; but you offer it, and I accept."

Even the impassible Englishman felt his heart soften and a tear trembled lightly on his lashes. Then looking at Roland, he said: —

"It is unfortunate that you are in such a hurry to reach home. It would have given me much pleasure and satisfaction to spend a day or two with you."

"Where were you going, Sir John, when we met?"

"I? — oh, nowhere. I am only travelling to escape being bored; unfortunately, I am often bored."

"Then you were going nowhere?"

"I was going everywhere."

"That 's exactly the same thing," said the young officer, laughing. "Well, then, will you do something?"

"Oh, very willingly, if it is possible."

"Perfectly possible; it only depends on you."

"What is it?"

"You agreed, if I were killed, to take me to my mother, or throw me into the Rhone."

"I should have taken you to your mother and not thrown you into the Rhone."

"Well, instead of taking me dead take me to her living; you will be even better received."

"Oh!"

"Yes; we will stay two weeks at Bourg. That is my native town, and one of the dullest in France; but as your compatriots are pre-eminent for originality perhaps you will amuse yourself where others would be bored. Do you agree?"

"I should like nothing better," said the Englishman; "but it seems to me scarcely proper on my part —"

"Oh! we are not in England, Sir John, where etiquette rules everything. We have neither king nor court; we did n't cut off the head of that poor creature they called Marie-Antoinette to put her Majesty Etiquette in her place."

"I should like to go," said Sir John.

"My mother is an excellent woman, and very distinguished. My sister was sixteen when I left home; she must now be eighteen. She was quite pretty, and may be beautiful by this time. Then there 's my brother Édouard, a young scamp of twelve, who will let off fire-crackers between your legs, and talk a gibberish of English to you. At the end of the two weeks we will go to Paris together."

"I have just come from Paris," said the Englishman.

"You said you would go to Egypt to see General Bonaparte. It is not so far to Paris as it is to Cairo. Come there with me; I 'll present you to him, and I 'll warrant that if presented by me you shall be well received. You spoke of Shakspeare just now —"

"Oh, yes; I am always quoting him."

"That proves that you like comedies, dramas."

"Indeed I do; that 's true enough."

"Well, General Bonaparte is on the point of producing

one in his own style which will not be wanting in interest, I 'll answer for it."

"Then," said Sir John, still hesitating, "if I may, without seeming intrusive, accept your offer — "

"I should hope so. You will give pleasure to everybody, — to me, especially."

"Then I accept."

"Bravo! Now, let 's see; when can you start?"

"This instant. I will tell the postilion to send for other horses; and as soon as they come we will go."

Roland made a sign of agreement. Sir John left the room to give his orders, and presently returned, saying that a couple of cutlets and some cold chicken were ready for them below. Roland took his valise and went down. The Englishman replaced his pistols in his carriage box. Both ate enough to enable them to travel all night, and as nine o'clock was striking from the Franciscan church, they settled themselves in the carriage and left Avignon (where their passage left another trail of blood), Roland with the careless indifference of his nature, Sir John Tanlay with the absolute impassibility of his nation. A quarter of an hour later both were asleep; or, at any rate, the silence that each maintained might make others think they had gone to sleep.

We shall profit by these moments of repose to give our readers some indispensable information as to Roland and his family.

Roland was born July 1, 1773, four years and a few days later than Bonaparte, with whom, or rather following whom, he first appeared in this book. He was the son of M. Charles de Montrevel, colonel of a regiment long in garrison at Martinique, where he had married a creole named Clotilde de la Clémencière. Three children were born of the marriage, two sons and a daughter, — Louis, whose acquaintance we have made under the name of Roland; Amélie, whose beauty her brother had praised to Sir John, and Édouard.

M. de Montrevel was recalled to France in 1782, and he then obtained admission for his elder son Louis (we shall see later how the name was changed to Roland) to the École Militaire in Paris. It was there that Bonaparte first knew the boy, just as he himself, on the report of M. de Keralio, was judged worthy of promotion from the École de Brienne to the École Militaire. Louis was the youngest pupil. Though he was only thirteen, he had made himself already remarkable for the ungovernable and quarrelsome character, of which, thirteen years later, he gave so marked an example at the table d'hôte at Avignon.

Bonaparte himself, who was a child in his way at this period of his life, had the good side of the same character; that is to say, without being quarrelsome, he was firm, obstinate, unconquerable. He recognized in the boy several of his own qualities, and this likeness in their natures made him forget the child's defects and attached him to him. The boy, on his side, conscious of a supporter in the young Corsican, leaned upon him.

One day he went to find his great friend, as he called Napoleon, just as the latter was deeply engaged in the solution of a mathematical problem. The boy knew the importance the future officer of artillery attached to that science, which so far had won him his greatest, or rather his only successes. He therefore stood beside him without speaking or moving.

The young mathematician felt the presence of the child as he plunged deeper and deeper into the intricacies of his calculation, until at the end of ten minutes he came out of them victorious. Then he turned to his young comrade with the inward satisfaction of a man who issues conqueror from any struggle, be it with science or material things. The boy stood erect beside him, pale, his teeth clenched, his arms rigid, his fists closed.

"Oh! ho!" said young Bonaparte; "what now?"

"Valence, the governor's nephew, struck me."

"Well!" said Bonaparte, laughing; "and you want me to strike him back for you?"

The boy shook his head.

"No," he said; "I came to you because I want to fight him."

"Fight Valence?"

"Yes."

"But Valence will get the better of you, child; he is four times as strong as you."

"Yes; and therefore I don't want to fight him as boys fight. I want to fight him as men fight."

"Pooh!"

"Does that surprise you?" asked the boy.

"Oh, no," said Bonaparte; "what weapon do you want to fight with?"

"Swords."

"None but the sergeants have swords, and they won't lend them to you."

"Then we can do without them."

"In that case what will you fight with?"

The boy pointed to the compasses with which the mathematician had just made his equations.

"Oh, my child!" cried Bonaparte; "compasses make dreadful wounds."

"So much the better," said Louis. "I can kill him."

"Suppose he kills you?"

"I 'd rather he did than bear his blow."

Bonaparte made no further objection. He liked courage by instinct, and that of his young comrade pleased him.

"Well, so be it!" he said. "I will go and see Valence, and tell him you wish to fight him, — but not till to-morrow."

"Why to-morrow?"

"You will have the night to reflect."

"And between now and to-morrow," said the child, "Valence will be thinking me a coward." Then shaking his head, "It is too long between now and to-morrow." And he walked away.

"Where are you going?" asked Bonaparte.

"To ask some one else if he will be my friend."

"Am not I your friend?"

"Not now, for you think me a coward."

"Enough!" said the young man, rising.

"Are you going?"

"I am going."

"At once?"

"At once."

"Ah!" cried the boy. "I beg your pardon; you are indeed my friend." And he sprang upon his neck weeping. They were the first tears he had shed since he received the blow.

Bonaparte went to find Valence, and gravely explained to him the object of his mission. Valence was a tall lad of seventeen, already possessing, like certain precocious natures, a beard and moustache; he seemed at least twenty. He was, moreover, a head taller than the boy he had insulted. To Bonaparte's remarks Valence replied that Louis had pulled his queue as if it were a bell-cord (they wore queues at that time); that he was twice warned to desist, but returned and did it a third time, on which, considering him a mischievous boy, he, Valence, had treated him as one.

This reply was carried to Louis, who retorted that to pull a comrade's queue was only teasing him; whereas a blow was an insult. The child's obstinacy gave him the logic of a man of thirty. The modern Popilius was forced to go back and declare war against Valence, who was placed in a most embarrassing situation. He could not fight a child without making himself ridiculous. If he fought and wounded him, the affair would be horrible; if he was wounded himself, he should never get over it as long as he lived. And yet Louis' obstinacy, which refused to yield, made the matter a serious one. A council of the "Grands" was called, as was usually done in cases of difficulty. The Grands decided that one of their number could not fight a child, but that as the child persisted

in considering himself a young man, Valence must say to him before their schoolmates that he was sorry for having treated him as a child and would in future regard him as a young man.

Louis was sent for. He was awaiting the decision in his friend's room, and was presently introduced to the conclave assembled in the playground of the younger scholars. There Valence, to whom his comrades had dictated a speech (hotly debated among themselves to save the honor of the Grands toward the Petits), declared to Louis that he regretted what had happened, that he had treated him according to his age, and not according to his intelligence and his courage, and that he now begged him to excuse his impatience and to shake hands with him in sign that all was forgotten.

But Louis shook his head.

"I have heard my father, who is a colonel, say," he replied, "that whoever receives a blow and does not fight is a coward. The first time I see my father I shall ask him whether he who gives a blow and makes excuses to escape fighting is not more of a coward than he who received it."

The young fellows looked at each other. Still, the general opinion being against a duel which would seem like murder, they unanimously, Bonaparte concurring, declared that the boy must be satisfied with what Valence had said, for it represented their opinion. Louis retired, pale with anger, and sulkily refused to speak to his "great friend," who, he said with imperturbable gravity, had sacrificed his honor.

The next day, while the Grands were receiving their lesson in mathematics, Louis slipped into the recitation room, and at the moment when Valence was making a demonstration on the blackboard, the boy approached him, jumped on a stool to be able to reach his face, and returned him the slap he had given the night before.

"There!" said he; "now we are quits, and I have your

excuses to boot. As for me, I sha'n't make any; you need n't trouble about that."

The scandal was great. The deed was done in presence of the professor, who was obliged to make his report to the governor of the school, the Marquis Tiburce Valence. The marquis, knowing nothing of the antecedents of the case, sent for the delinquent, and after giving him a terrible lecture, told him he was no longer a member of the school, and that he must be ready that very day to return to his mother at Bourg. Louis replied that he could pack his things in ten minutes and be out of the school in fifteen. Of the blow he had himself received, he said not a word.

The answer seemed more than disrespectful to the marquis, who was greatly inclined to send the irreverent youth to the dungeons for a week; but he reflected that it would be impossible to imprison him and expel him both. So a man was appointed to watch the boy and not leave him for a moment until he had put him into the coach for Mâcon; Madame de Montrevel was to be notified in time to meet him on his arrival.

Bonaparte happened to see the boy followed by his keeper, and asked him an explanation of the sort of constabulary guard attached to him.

"I would tell you if you were still my friend," said the boy; "but you are not. Why disturb yourself about any thing that happens to me, whether good or evil?"

Bonaparte made a sign to the keeper, who, while Louis was packing his little trunk, came to the door of the room and spoke to him. He then found out that the boy was expelled. The step was serious; it would fill a whole family with distress, and possibly ruin the future of his young comrade. With that rapidity of decision which was one of the characteristic signs of his organization, he resolved to ask an audience of the governor, meantime requesting the keeper not to hasten Louis' departure. Bonaparte was an excellent pupil, much beloved in the

school and much esteemed by the governor. His request was immediately complied with. When ushered into the governor's presence he told him all, and without blaming Valence he tried to excuse Louis.

"Are you sure that what you tell me is so, monsieur?" asked the governor.

"Inquire of your nephew himself. I will abide by what he says."

Valence was sent for. He had already heard of Louis' expulsion, and was on his way to tell his uncle what had really happened. His account confirmed that of young Bonaparte.

"Very good," said the governor. "Louis shall not leave the school, but you will. You are old enough now to enter the service." Then ringing the bell, "Bring me the list of the vacant sub-lieutenancies," he said to the orderly.

That same day an urgent request was made to the ministry for an appointment, and that same night Valence departed to join his regiment. He went to say good-bye to Louis, whom he embraced half-willingly, half-unwillingly, while Bonaparte grasped his hand. The boy received the embrace reluctantly.

"That 's all very well for the present," he said; "but if we ever meet again with swords by our sides — " A threatening gesture ended the speech.

Bonaparte received his own appointment as sub-lieutenant October 10, 1785. His was one of the fifty-eight commissions which Louis XVI. signed for the École Militaire. Eight years later, November 15, 1796, Bonaparte, commanding the Army of Italy at the Bridge of Arcola, which was defended by two regiments of Croats and two cannon, seeing the grape-shot and the musket-balls mowing down his ranks, feeling that victory was slipping through his fingers, and alarmed at the hesitation of his bravest troops, suddenly wrenched the tri-color from the stiffening fingers of a dying color-bearer and sprang upon

the bridge crying out: "Soldiers! are you no longer the men of Lodi?" As he did so, a young lieutenant sprang past him and covered him with his body.

This was far from pleasing Bonaparte; he wished to go first. Had it been possible, he would fain have gone alone. He caught the young man by the flap of his coat and pulling him back said: "Citizen, you are only a lieutenant; I am the commander-in-chief. I have the right of way."

"Too true," replied the other; and he followed Bonaparte instead of preceding him.

That evening, learning that two Austrian divisions had been cut to pieces, and seeing the two thousand prisoners whom he had taken, together with the cannon and the flags, Bonaparte remembered the young lieutenant who had sprung in front of him when there seemed nothing but death before them.

"Berthier," he said, "give orders to my aide-de-camp Valence to find a young lieutenant of grenadiers with whom I had an affair this morning on the bridge at Arcola."

"General," said Berthier, stammering, "Valence is wounded."

"I remember now, I have not seen him to-day. Where was he wounded, and how, — on the battlefield?"

"No, general; he had a quarrel yesterday and was run through the body."

Bonaparte frowned.

"They know very well I do not like duels; a soldier's blood is not his own, it belongs to France. Give the order to Muiron, then."

"He is killed, general."

"To Elliot, in that case."

"Killed also."

Bonaparte pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his forehead, which was bathed in sweat.

"Whom you can then; but I must see that lieutenant."

He dared not name another of his staff, fearing to hear again that fatal "Killed."

Half an hour later a young lieutenant was ushered into the tent, where a single lamp was casting a feeble light.

"Come nearer, lieutenant," said Bonaparte.

The young man made three steps and came within the radius of the light.

"Was it you who tried to pass me on the bridge this morning?" said Bonaparte.

"General, it was a bet I had made," replied the young man, gayly; his voice made the general start.

"Did I cause you to lose it?"

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no."

"What was the bet?"

"That I should be made a captain to-day."

"You have won it."

"Thank you, general."

And the young man darted forward as if to press Bonaparte's hand, but checked himself, and immediately stepped back. The lamp had lighted his face during that brief instant, and that instant had sufficed to make the general take notice of the face, as he already had taken notice of the voice. Neither the one nor the other seemed unknown to him. He searched his memory for a moment, but finding it rebellious said: —

"I know you."

"Possibly, general."

"I am certain of it; only I cannot remember your name."

"You have so managed matters, general, that no one can forget yours."

"Who are you?"

"Ask Valence, general."

Bonaparte gave a cry of joy.

"Louis de Montrevel!" he exclaimed; and he opened wide his arms. This time the young lieutenant did not hesitate to fling himself into them.

"Good," said Bonaparte. "You will serve eight days with the regiment in your new rank; so that they may get accustomed to see you with your captain's epaulets; after that you will take the place of my poor Muiron as aide-de-camp. Go!"

"Once more!" said the young man, opening his arms.

"Faith, yes!" cried Bonaparte, joyfully. Then, holding him fast to him after kissing him twice, he said: "Was it you who ran Valence through the body?"

"Don't you remember, general? — you were there when I promised it to him. A soldier keeps his word."

Eight days later Captain Montrevel was doing duty as a staff officer to the commander-in-chief, who changed his name of Louis, then in bad odor, to that of Roland.

Roland — no one would have dared to call him Louis after Bonaparte had rebaptized him — made the campaign of Italy with his general, and returned with him to Paris after the peace of Campo Formio. When the Egyptian expedition was decided on, Roland, who at that time was with his mother, after the death of his father, Brigadier-general Montrevel, killed on the Rhine while his son was fighting on the Adige and the Mincio, — Roland was among the first officers appointed by Bonaparte to take part in the useless but poetic crusade he was then planning. The young man left his mother, sister, and little brother at Bourg, General de Montrevel's native town. They lived at Les Noires-Fontaines, a charming house called a château, about two miles from the town, surrounded by a farm and several hundred acres of land, which yielded a rental of six or eight thousand francs a year and constituted the entire fortune of the family. Roland's departure on this adventurous expedition was a great grief to the poor widow. The death of the father seemed to forewarn her of the death of the son; and Madame de Montrevel, a gentle, tender creole, was far from having the stern virtues of a Spartan or Lacedemonian mother.

Bonaparte, who loved his old schoolmate of the École

Militaire with all his heart, had given him permission to rejoin the staff at the last moment at Toulon. But the fear of arriving too late prevented Roland from profiting by the kindness to its full extent. He left his mother, promising her not to expose himself unnecessarily, and arrived at Toulon eight days before the fleet set sail.

It is not our intention to tell here the tale of the campaign of Egypt, having already told it at some length elsewhere. On the 16th of May, 1798, Bonaparte and his whole staff sailed for the Orient; on the 15th of June the Knights of Malta gave up the keys of their citadel. July 2 the army disembarked on the Mussulman coast and the same day took Alexandria; the 25th Bonaparte entered Cairo after defeating the Mameluks at Chebreïss and the Pyramids. During this succession of marches and fights Roland had been the officer that we know him, — brave, gay, witty, defying the scorching heat of the sun and the icy dew of the nights, flinging himself like a hero or a fool among the Turkish sabres or the Bedouin balls. During the forty days of the voyage from Toulon he had scarcely left the side of the interpreter, Ventura, so that with his wonderful facility he had not only learned to speak Arabic fluently, but could make himself thoroughly understood in that language. It therefore happened that, when the general for any reason did not wish to use the native interpreter, Roland was charged with certain special communications to the muftis, ulemas, and sheiks.

During the night of October 20 and 21 Cairo revolted. At five in the morning the death of General Dupuy, killed by a lance, was made known. At eight, just as the riot was thought to be quelled, an aide-de-camp of the dead general rode up announcing that a party of Bedouins from the interior were attacking the Bab el Nasr and the gate of Victory.

Bonaparte was at that moment breakfasting with his aide-de-camp Sulkowski, grievously wounded at Salahieh. The general, forgetting in his eagerness the condition of

the young Pole, said to him: "Sulkowski, take fifteen of the Guides and go and see what those scoundrels want."

Sulkowski rose.

"General," said Roland, "send me; don't you see that Sulkowski can hardly stand?"

"True," said Bonaparte. "Do you go."

Roland went out, took the fifteen Guides, and started.

But the order had been given to Sulkowski, and Sulkowski was determined to execute it. He started with half a dozen men whom he found ready. Whether by chance, or whether it was that he knew the streets of Cairo better than Roland, he reached the gate of Victory a few seconds before him. When Roland arrived he saw six dead men and the body of an officer being carried away by the Arabs. Arabs will sometimes, while pitilessly massacring soldiers, spare the lives of officers in hopes of a ransom. Roland recognized Sulkowski; and pointing him out with his sabre to his fifteen men he charged after the Arabs at a gallop.

Half an hour later, one man of that party returned alone to headquarters and announced the death of Sulkowski and Roland and their twenty followers. Bonaparte, as we have said, loved Roland as a brother, as a son, as he loved Eugène. He wished to know all the details of the catastrophe and questioned the survivor himself. The man had seen an Arab cut off Sulkowski's head and hang it to his saddlebow. As for Roland, his horse had been killed; he had disengaged his feet from the stirrups and fought a few moments standing. But he soon disappeared in the smoke of a volley fired upon him at close quarters.

Bonaparte sighed, shed a tear, murmured "Another!" and seemed to think no more about it. He did, however, inquire to what tribe of Arabs these Bedouins belonged; and was told that they were an independent tribe living in a village about thirty miles distant from Cairo. Bonaparte let them alone for a month, that they might rely on

their impunity. Then he ordered one of his aides-de-camp, named Croisier, to surround the village, destroy the huts, cut the heads off the men and put them in sacks, and bring the women and children to Cairo. Croisier executed the order punctually. A population of women and children were brought to Cairo and also one living Arab, bound and gagged and tied to his horse.

"Why did you bring a living man?" asked Bonaparte. "I told you to cut off the head of every man who could bear arms."

"General," said Croisier, who himself had picked up a little Arabic. "Just as I was about to order that man's head cut off, I understood him to offer to exchange a prisoner's life for his. I thought it would be time enough to cut his head off later and I had better bring him with me. If I am not mistaken the ceremony can take place here just as well as there; what is postponed is not abandoned."

Bonaparte sent for Ventura and questioned the Bedouin. He replied that he had saved the life of a French officer seriously wounded at the gate of Victory; that this officer spoke Arabic and said he was aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte. The man then told how he had sent the officer to his brother who was a famous doctor in an adjoining village; the officer, he said, was now a prisoner in that village, and he would, if his life were promised to him, write to his brother to send the prisoner back to Cairo.

Possibly the tale was invented to gain time, but it might be true; nothing was lost by waiting. The Arab was placed in safe keeping; a scribe was brought to write at his dictation. He sealed the letter with his seal and an Arab belonging to Cairo started to negotiate the exchange. If he succeeded the reward was to be the life of the Bedouin and five hundred piastres for the messenger.

Three days later the emissary returned bringing Roland. Bonaparte had hoped for this result, but dared not expect it. That iron heart, which had seemed insensible to pain,

now melted with joy. He opened his arms to Roland as on the day when he recovered him at Arcola, and tears, two pearls, — the tears of Bonaparte were rare indeed, — fell from his eyes.

As often happens to those who brave fire and sword, fire and sword miraculously avoided Roland. Before and behind him men fell; but he remained erect, invulnerable as the demon of war. During the campaign in Syria flags of trùce were twice sent to summon Djezzar Pacha to surrender Saint-Jean-d'Acre. Neither of the bearers returned; their heads were cut off. A third was to be sent. Roland applied for the duty, obtained the general's permission, went, and returned in safety. He took part in each of the nineteen assaults upon the fortress; at each assault he was seen in the breach. He was one of ten men who forced their way into the Accursèd Tower; nine remained, but he came back without a scratch. At Aboukir he flung himself into the mêlée, reached the pacha by forcing his way through the guard of blacks who surrounded him, and received the fire of both his pistols. One burned the wadding only; the other shot passed under Roland's arm and killed the soldier behind him.

When Bonaparte determined to return to France Roland was the first to whom he revealed that intention. As they crossed the Mediterranean near Corsica the English fleet hove in sight. Bonaparte had declared to Admiral Gantheaume that he would fight to the death, and he gave orders to blow the ship up if necessary, sooner than haul down the flag. He passed, however, through the British fleet in the night-time without being seen, and landed at Fréjus October 8, 1799. He sent Eugène, Berthier, Bourrienne, his aides-de-camp, and suite, by the road through Gap and Draguignan; while he himself, in citizen's dress, and strictly incognito, took the road by Aix, accompanied only by Roland, that he might judge for himself as to the feeling of the South.

On arriving at Aix he announced to Roland that they

would part at Lyon, for he gave him three weeks' furlough in which to visit his mother and sister. We already know how they reached Avignon and what happened there; and we have seen with what profound contempt for danger Roland provoked a duel, and what were the results.

And now, as we have said, Sir John and he were sleeping, or appearing to sleep, in the Englishman's luxurious carriage drawn by two horses at full speed along the road from Avignon to Orange.

VI.

MORGAN.

Our readers must permit us to abandon for a time Sir John Tanlay and Roland, who, thanks to the moral and physical condition in which we left them, need inspire no anxiety, while we turn our attention seriously to a personage who has, so far, made but a brief appearance in this history, though he is destined to fill a large place in it.

We speak of the man who entered the dining-room of the inn at Avignon, masked and armed, to return to Jean Picot the two hundred louis which were mixed with the government money and taken from the diligence by mistake. The bold bandit, who called himself Morgan, had ridden into Avignon, masked, in broad daylight. He had left his horse at the door of the inn, and as if the horse had enjoyed in that pontifical and royalist town the same immunity as its master, he found it again when he came out, unfastened its bridle, sprang into the saddle, rode through the Porte d'Oulle and disappeared at full gallop along the high road to Lyon. Only once, about three quarters of a mile from Avignon, he slackened speed to gather his mantle closer about him, hide his weapons, and take off his mask, which he slipped into one of the holsters of his saddle.

The persons he left behind him at Avignon, who were puzzled to decide if this could indeed be the terrible Morgan, the terror of the South, might have convinced themselves with their own eyes, had they met him on the road between Avignon and Bédarides, whether the appearance

of the famous bandit was really as terrifying as his fame. We do not hesitate to say that the features he now presented would have seemed to them so little in harmony with the idea that their prejudiced imagination had concocted that their amazement and stupefaction would have been extreme.

The removal of the mask, done by a hand of perfect delicacy and whiteness, revealed the face of a young man scarcely twenty-five years of age, — a face that had something of the character of a woman's, so regular were the features and so gentle their expression. One only point, however, gave it, or rather would give it at certain moments, a character of singular firmness: beneath the beautiful fair hair waving on the forehead and temples, as the fashion was in those days, the eyebrows, eyes, and lashes were black as ebony. The rest of the face, as we have said, was almost feminine. There were two small ears, the tips of which could just be seen below the tufts of hair on either side of the face to which the Incroyables of the day gave the name of "dog's-ears;" a straight and well-proportioned nose; a rather large mouth, rosy and always smiling, and which, when smiling, showed a double row of brilliant teeth; a refined and delicate chin, with a faint tinge of blue upon it, showing that if the beard had not been carefully and recently shaved it would, protesting against the golden color of the hair, have followed that of the brows and eyes and lashes. As for the figure of the unknown man, it was seen, as he entered the dining-room of the inn, to be tall, well set-up, flexible, and denoting, if not great muscular strength, at least great suppleness and agility.

The manner in which he sat his horse showed the ease of a practised rider. With his cloak thrown back from the shoulders, his mask hidden in the holster, his hat pulled down over his eyes, he now resumed his rapid pace (checked for a moment), passed through Bédarides at a gallop, and reaching the first houses in Orange entered

the gates of one of them, which closed immediately behind him. A servant was in waiting, who took the horse by the bit. The rider rapidly dismounted.

"Is your master here?" he inquired.

"No, monsieur le comte," answered the man. "He was obliged to go away last night, but he told me, if monsieur came and asked for him, to say that he had gone on business for the Company."

"Very good, Baptiste. I have brought back his horse in good condition, though a little tired; wash him with wine and give him, for two or three days, barley instead of oats. He has done nearly a hundred miles since yesterday morning."

"M. le comte was satisfied with him?"

"Quite satisfied. Is the carriage ready?"

"Yes, monsieur le comte; all harnessed in the coach-house. The postilion is drinking with Julien. Monsieur ordered that he should be kept away from the house so that he should not see him arrive."

"He thinks it is your master whom he takes?"

"Yes, monsieur le comte. Here is my master's passport, with which we got post-horses; and as my master has gone the Bordeaux way with M. le comte's passport, and M. le comte is going the Geneva way with my master's passport, we think the skein will be so tangled that those damned gendarmes, clever as their fingers are, can't unravel it."

"Take off the valise that is on the croup of the saddle and give it to me, Baptiste."

Baptiste began to obey; but the valise almost slipped from his hands.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, laughing. "M. le comte did not warn me. The devil! M. le comte has n't wasted his time, it seems."

"You are mistaken, Baptiste. If I have n't lost all my time I have lost a good deal of it, so that I must now be off as fast as I can."

"But won't M. le comte breakfast?"

"I 'll eat a mouthful — quickly."

"Monsieur shall not be kept waiting; it is half-past two, and breakfast has been ready since twelve. Luckily it is a cold breakfast."

And Baptiste, in the absence of his master, did the honors of the house to the visitor, and started to precede him to the dining-room.

"Never mind," said the count; "I know the way. Go and attend to the carriage; let it be close to the house, with the door wide open, so that when I come out I can jump right into it without the postilion seeing me. Here 's enough to pay him for the first relay."

And the stranger gave Baptiste a handful of assignats.

"Why, monsieur," said the man, "here 's enough to pay all the way to Lyon."

"Pay as far as Valence, under pretence that I want to sleep, and keep the rest for your trouble in making out the accounts."

"Shall I put the valise under the seat?"

"No, I 'll take it myself."

Taking the valise from the servant's hand without letting it be seen that it weighed heavily, he walked toward the dining-room, while Baptiste made his way to a neighboring tavern to call the postilion and count his assignats.

As the stranger had said, the way was familiar to him, for he passed down a corridor, opened without hesitation the first door, then a second, and found himself before a table elegantly served. A chicken, two partridges, and cold ham, several kinds of cheese, a dessert of magnificent fruit, and two decanters, one containing wine of a rich ruby color, the other like topaz, made a breakfast which, though evidently intended for one person only, as only one place was laid, might, in case of need, have sufficed for three or four.

The first act of the young man on entering the dining-room was to go straight to a mirror, take off his hat, and

arrange his hair with a little comb which he took from his pocket; after which he went to a porcelain basin with a reservoir above it, took a towel, which was there for the purpose, and washed his face and hands. It was not until after he had attended to these little niceties — characteristic of a man of elegant habits — that he sat down to table.

A few moments sufficed to satisfy his appetite, to which, however, youth and fatigue gave magnificent proportions; and when Baptiste came in to announce that the carriage was ready he found the stranger afoot and waiting. The latter pulled his hat again over his eyes, wrapped his cloak about him, took the valise under his arm, and as Baptiste had taken pains to bring the steps of the carriage as close as possible to the door, he sprang into the vehicle instantly without being seen by the postilion. Baptiste slammed the door; then, addressing the man in top-boots, —

"All is paid to Valence, is n't it, — relays and fees?" he asked.

"Yes, all; do you want a receipt?" answered the postilion, joking.

"No; but my master, the Marquis de Ribier, does n't want to be disturbed till he gets to Valence."

"Very good," replied the postilion in the same bantering tone; "no one shall disturb the citizen marquis. Houp-là!"

And he woke up his horses and snapped his whip with that noisy eloquence which says to both neighbors and passers-by, "Out of the way, out of the way, there! I 'm driving a man who pays well and has a right to run over others."

Once in the carriage, the pretended Marquis de Ribier opened the window, pulled down the shades, raised the seat, put his valise in the hollow beneath it, sat down again, wrapped his cloak around him, and, certain of not being waked till he reached Valence, slept as he had eaten, that is to say, with the appetite of youth.

They went from Orange to Valence in eight hours, and

not long before entering the town our traveller woke up. He cautiously lifted a blind and saw that he was passing through the village of La Paillasse. It was dark; he struck his repeater and found it was eleven at night. Thinking it useless to go to sleep again, he added up the cost of the relays to Lyon and got out the money. When the postilion at Valence met the comrade who took his place the traveller heard him say: —

"I think he's a ci-devant; but he came recommended from Orange and as he pays twenty-sous fees you must treat him as you would a patriot."

"Good!" said the other; "he shall be driven accordingly."

The traveller thought the time had come to speak. He raised the blind and said: —

"You 'll only do me justice. A patriot? Bless my soul! I boast of being one, and first calibre, too! and the proof is — Here! take that and drink to the health of the Republic!" and he gave an assignat of a hundred sous to the postilion who had recommended him to his comrade. "And the same to you," he continued, addressing the new man, "if you give to the others the same recommendation you have just received."

"Oh, you need n't fear, citizen; there will be but one order to Lyon, — full speed!"

"Here is the money for the sixteen posts in advance, including the double post of entrance. I pay twenty-sous fees; settle that among yourselves."

The postilion sprang into his saddle, and they started at full gallop. The carriage relayed at Lyon about four in the afternoon. While the horses were being put to, a man dressed as a porter, and sitting with his stretcher behind him on a stone post, rose, came up to the carriage, and said something in a low voice to its occupant which seemed to astonish him greatly.

"Are you quite sure?" he said to the porter.

"I tell you that I saw him with my own eyes."

"Then I can tell it to our friends as a positive fact?"

"You can. Only, make haste."

"Are the servants notified at Servas?"

"Yes; you 'll find a horse ready between Servas and Sue."

The postilion came up. The young man exchanged a look with the porter, who walked away as if charged to mail a letter.

"What road, citizen?" asked the postilion.

"To Bourg; I want to reach Servas by nine o'clock. I pay thirty-sous fees."

"Forty-two miles in five hours! that 's tough. However, it can be done."

"Will you do it?"

"We 'll try to."

And the postilion started at full gallop.

Nine o'clock was striking as they entered Servas.

"A crown of six francs if you 'll not change horses here, and will take me half-way to Sue," cried the young man through the window to the postilion.

"Very good," said the latter.

And the carriage passed the post-house without stopping. Half a mile beyond Servas Morgan put his head out of the window, made a trumpet of his hands and gave the cry of a screech-owl. The imitation was so perfect that another owl answered from the woods.

"Here 's the place; stop here!" cried Morgan to the postilion, who immediately pulled up.

The young man took his valise, opened the carriage-door, and jumped out. Approaching the postilion, he gave him the promised crown of six francs. The postilion took the coin and stuck it into the hollow of his eye, as a fop in our day holds his eyeglass. Morgan knew that this pantomime had a meaning.

"Well," he said, "what is that for?"

"To let you know," said the postilion, "that, do as I will, I can't help seeing with one eye."

"I understand," said the young man, laughing; "and if I close the other eye — "

"Damn it! I sha'n't see anything."

"Hey! you are a queer fellow, who would rather be blind of both eyes than see with one. Well, I don't dispute tastes. Here!"

And he gave him a second crown. The postilion made a motion to stick it in the other eye, wheeled the carriage round, and took the road back to Servas.

The Companion of Jehu waited till the sound of the wheels died away. Then putting the hollow of a key to his lips, he drew a long trembling sound from it, like that from a boatswain's whistle.

A similar sound answered him, and immediately after a horseman issued from the woods at full gallop. As he caught sight of him, Morgan hastily put on his mask.

"In whose name have you come here?" asked the rider, whose face could not be seen, hidden as it was by the immense brim of his hat.

"In the name of the prophet Elisha," replied the young man.

"Then it is you I am waiting for;" and he got off his horse.

"Are you prophet or disciple?" asked Morgan.

"Disciple."

"Where is your master?"

"You will find him in the Chartreuse of Seillon."

"Do you know how many Companions are there to-night?"

"Twelve."

"Very good; if you meet others send them to the rendezvous."

The man who had called himself a disciple bowed in sign of obedience, helped Morgan to fasten his valise to the croup of the saddle, and held the horse by the bit respectfully, while the young man mounted. Without even waiting to put his other foot in the stirrup Morgan

spurred the horse, which tore the bit from the servant's hand and started at full gallop.

On the right of the road lay the forest of Seillon like a sea of darkness, the sombre waves of which were undulating and moaning to the sweep of the night wind. Half a mile beyond Sue the rider turned his horse across country toward the forest, which, as he rode on, seemed to be approaching him. The horse, guided by a practised hand, plunged into the woods without hesitating. Ten minutes later horse and rider emerged on the other side.

About a hundred feet from the wood rose a gloomy mass, isolated, apparently, in the middle of a plain. It was a building of massive architecture, shaded by five or six venerable trees. The horseman stopped before the portal, above which were placed three statues in triangle: of the Virgin, our Lord, and John the Baptist. The statue of the Virgin was at the apex of the triangle.

The mysterious traveller had reached the end of his journey, for this was the Chartreuse of Seillon. This monastery, the twenty-second of its order, was founded in 1178. In 1672 a modern building had been substituted for the old convent. Vestiges of this last building can be seen to this day. They are, externally, the portal we have mentioned with the three statues; internally, a small chapel, entered from the right after passing through the portal.

A peasant, his wife, and two children are now living there, and the old monastery has become a farmhouse. In 1791 the monks were expelled; in 1792 the convent and all its dependencies were offered for sale as ecclesiastical property. The dependencies were, first, the park surrounding the buildings, and next, the noble forest which still goes by the name of the forest of Seillon. But at Bourg — a royalist and above all a religious town — no one risked his soul by purchasing property belonging to worthy monks whom

they all revered. Thus it happened that the convent park, and forest had become, under the title of national domain, the property of the Republic, — that is to say, they belonged to nobody; or, at any rate, they were deserted, the Republic having, for the last seven years, had something else to think of than pointing walls, cultivating orchards, and cutting timber regularly.

For seven years, therefore, the Chartreuse was completely abandoned; and if by chance any curious eyes looked through the keyhole of its great gate, they saw the grass growing in the courtyards like the brambles in the orchard, and the brush in the forest, which, except for one road which crossed it and one or two paths, had now become impenetrable. A species of pavilion, called La Correrie, belonging to the monastery and distant from it about two thirds of a mile, was buried and overgrown with moss in these tangled woods, which were profiting by their freedom to grow at their own sweet will, and had long since wrapped the pavilion in a mantle of foliage which hid it from sight.

The strangest rumors were current about these buildings. It was said they were haunted by guests, invisible in the daytime, horrible to behold at night. Woodsmen or belated peasants, who sometimes went into the forest to exercise against the Republic the privileges the town of Bourg had always enjoyed under the monks, declared that they had seen, through the chinks of the closed blinds flames of fire running along the corridors and up the stairs, and had heard distinctly the sound of chains being dragged over the pavement of the cloisters and courtyards. The stronger-minded of the inhabitants denied all this; but two very opposite sets of opinion were against the unbelievers, — the patriots declaring that the ghosts were the souls of the poor monks buried alive by the tyranny of convent rule in the *in pace*, who were now dragging about the fetters they had worn in life, calling down the vengeance of heaven on their persecutors; the royalists, on the other

hand, said they were the imps of the devil himself, who finding an empty convent and no further danger from holy water, were boldly keeping their orgies where once they would never have dared to put a claw. One fact, however, left everything uncertain: not a single person among the unbelievers or the believers (whether they held to the souls of the martyred monks, or to the witches' sabbath of Beelzebub) had ever dared to risk himself among those shadows, or to come in the solemn hours of the night and find out the truth, so as to tell the neighborhood on the following day whether or not the monastery were haunted, and if haunted, by whom.

But no doubt these tales, whether well-founded or not, had no influence on our mysterious horseman; for though, as we have said, nine o'clock had rung from the steeples at Bourg, and the night was dark, he stopped his horse in front of the great portal, and, without dismounting, pulled a pistol from the holster and gave three raps with its pommel on the door, after the manner of the free-masons. Then he listened. For a moment he doubted if the meeting were really there; for closely as he looked, attentively as he listened, he could see no light and hear no noise. But presently he fancied that a cautious step was approaching the door. He knocked a second time in the same manner.

"Who knocks?" said a voice.

"One from Elisha," was the answer.

"What king do the sons of Isaac obey?"

"Jehu."

"What house must they exterminate?"

"That of Ahab."

"Are you prophet, or disciple?"

"Prophet."

"Welcome to the house of the Lord!" said the voice.

The iron bars which secured the massive door swung back, the bolts grated in their sockets; half of the great gate silently opened, and horse and rider passed

in beneath the portal, which was instantly closed behind them.

The individual who had opened this gate — so slow to open, so quick to close — was clothed in the long white robe of a Chartreux monk, the hood of which falling over his head entirely concealed his face.

VII.

THE CHARTREUSE OF SEILLON.

No doubt, like the first "disciple" met on the road to Sue by the man who styled himself "prophet," the monk who had opened the gate was of secondary rank in the fraternity; for he now grasped the bridle of the horse and held him while the rider dismounted, doing for the young man the service of a groom.

Morgan got down, took off the valise, pulled the pistols from the holsters and put them in his belt next to those already there; and then, addressing the monk in a tone of command, he said: —

"I thought I should find the brothers assembled in council."

"They have assembled," replied the monk.

"Where?"

"In La Correrie. Suspicious persons have been seen about the Chartreuse, and orders have been issued to take the greatest precautions."

The young man shrugged his shoulders, as if he considered all such precautions useless, and in the same tone of command he said: —

"Let some one take the horse to the stable, and show me yourself the way to the council."

The monk called another brother, to whom he flung the bridle. Then he lit a torch at a lamp in the little chapel which can still be seen to the right of the great portal, and walked in front of the new-comer. He crossed the cloister, made a few steps into the garden, opened a door leading to a sort of reservoir, invited Morgan to enter, closed it as

carefully as he had closed the front door, touched with his foot a stone which seemed to be accidentally lying there, and disclosed a ring, by which he raised a paving-stone which covered a flight of steps. These steps led down to a passage with a rounded roof, wide enough to admit two men abreast. The two men walked along silently for some five or six minutes, and then they paused before a grated iron door. The monk drew a key from his frock and opened it. Then, when both had passed through and the door was locked behind them, the monk said: —

"By what name shall I announce you?"

"As Brother Morgan."

"Wait here; I shall be back in five minutes."

The young man made a sign which proved that he was familiar with such distrust and all the present precautions. Then he seated himself on a tomb — the place was one of the mortuary vaults of the convent — and waited. Five minutes had scarcely elapsed when the monk reappeared.

"Follow me," he said; "the brothers are glad you have come. They feared some misfortune had happened to you."

A few seconds later Morgan was introduced into the council chamber.

Twelve monks were awaiting him with their hoods drawn down over their eyes. But as soon as the door was closed and the serving brother had disappeared, and Morgan himself was removing his mask, all the hoods were thrown back and the face of each monk was exposed.

No brotherhood ever showed a more brilliant assemblage of handsome and joyous young men. Two or three only of these strange monks had reached the age of forty. All hands were held out to Morgan, and several hearty embraces were given to him.

"I declare to you," said the one who had welcomed him most tenderly, "you have drawn a cruel thorn out of my foot; we thought you dead, or, at any rate, a prisoner."

"Dead I might be, but prisoner never, Amiet. The

whole affair was conducted on both sides with touching amenity. As soon as the conductor saw us he called to the postilion to stop; I think he added, 'I know what it is.' 'Well,' said I, 'if you know what it is, my good friend, no need for explanations.' 'The government money?' he asked. 'Exactly,' I replied. Then, as a great fuss was going on inside the carriage, I added, 'First of all, dismount, and go and tell those gentlemen, but particularly those ladies, that we are well-behaved persons who will not meddle with them, — the ladies, you understand; and that nobody will be even looked at unless they put their heads out of the window.' One of them risked it, though; and I give my word she was a beauty. I blew her a kiss, and she gave a little cry and drew back into the coach, — for all the world like Galatea, — but as there were no willows about, I did n't pursue her. During this time the conductor was searching his strong-box in all haste; in fact, in such haste, that in addition to the government money he gave me two hundred louis belonging to a poor wine-merchant of Bordeaux."

"The devil!" exclaimed the brother called Amiet, — a name which was probably, like that of Morgan, assumed, — "that is annoying! You know the Directory, with brilliant inspiration, has organized companies of 'chauffeurs,' who attack the coaches in our name in order to make people believe we meddle with private persons, — in other words, that we are robbers."

"Now wait," said Morgan; "that is just what makes me so late. I had heard something of what you say at Lyon. I was half-way to Valence before I found out the mistake. That was not very difficult, for the worthy man, as if foreseeing what would happen, had labelled the package, 'Jean Picot, wine-merchant, Bordeaux.'"

"And you sent it back to him?"

"I did better; I took it to him."

"At Fronsac?"

"Oh, no! at Avignon. I felt certain that so careful a

man would stop at the first large town he came to and inquire his chances of getting back his money. I was not mistaken. I inquired at the hôtel if they knew a man named Jean Picot. They replied that they not only knew him, but he was just then dining at the table d'hôte. I went in. You can imagine they were all talking about the stoppage of the diligence. Conceive the effect of my apparition! The god of antiquity issuing from the machine did not produce a more unexpected finale. I asked which of the guests was named Jean Picot. The one who bore that distinguished and melodious name acknowledged it. I laid before him his two hundred louis with many apologies for the anxiety we, The Company of Jehu, had caused him. I exchanged a glance with Barjols and a polite nod with the Abbé de Rians, who were both there; I made a profound bow to the company, and off I came. It was n't much to do, but it took me fifteen hours; that 's why I am so late. I thought I had better be late than leave upon our traces a real cause for a false opinion of us. Did I do right, brothers?"

The company burst forth into bravos.

"Only," said one, "I think it was imprudent of you to carry the money yourself to Jean Picot."

"My dear colonel," said the young man, "there 's an Italian proverb which says, 'Who wills, goes; who wills not, sends.' I willed and I went."

"And you 've made a jovial friend, who if you fall into the hands of the Directory, will recognize you out of gratitude; and recognition will mean cutting your head off."

"Oh! I 'll defy him to recognize me."

"How can you prevent it?"

"Do you suppose I play such pranks with my face uncovered? My dear colonel, you mistake me for some one else. I take my mask off among friends, and that 's all right; but among strangers — No, no; I am not so foolish. Are not these carnival times? I don't see why I should n't disguise myself as Abellino or Karl Moor

when Messieurs Gohier, Sieyès, Roger Ducos, Barras, and Moulins are masquerading as kings of France."

"Did you enter the town masked?"

"The town, the hotel, and the dining-room. It is true that though my face was well covered, my belt was not, and, as you see, it was well garnished."

The young man made a movement which tossed aside his cloak and showed his belt, in which four pistols were stuck, and from which hung a hunting-knife. Then, with that gayety which seems a dominant characteristic of such careless temperaments, he added: —

"I ought to look ferocious, ought n't I? They probably mistook me for the late Mandrin descending from the fastnesses of Savoie. By the bye, here are the sixty thousand francs of their Serene Highnesses the Directory." And the young man gave a disdainful kick to the valise, the bowels of which returned a metallic sound, indicating the presence of gold. Then he turned aside and mingled with the group of friends, from whom he had hitherto been separated by the natural distance between the narrator of a tale and his listeners.

One of the monks stooped and picked up the valise.

"Despise gold as much as you please, my dear Morgan, so long as that does not prevent you from capturing it; but I know worthy persons who are awaiting those sixty thousand francs that you kick disdainfully with as much impatience and anxiety as a caravan lost in the desert awaits the drop of water which is to save them from dying of thirst."

"Our friends in La Vendée, you mean," replied Morgan. "Much good will it do them! Egotists! — fighting, are they? Those gentlemen have chosen the roses, and left us the thorns. Ha! do you think they get nothing from England?"

"I know they do," said one of the monks, gayly; "at Quiberon they got bullets and grape-shot."

"I did not say from the English," returned Morgan. "I said from England."

"Not one penny."

"But I think," said one of the Company, who seemed to possess a more reflecting head than the rest of the fraternity, "I think our princes might send a little gold to those who are pouring out their blood for the monarchy. Are they not afraid that La Vendée will end by wearying of a devotion which up to this time has not received, so far as I know, one word of thanks?"

"La Vendée, my dear friend," said Morgan, "is a generous land, and will never weary, believe me. Besides, where would be the merit of fidelity if it never had to deal with ingratitude. The moment devotion is met by gratitude it is no longer devotion. It becomes an exchange; it receives a return. Let us be faithful always, devoted always, praying Heaven to make those to whom we are devoted ungrateful, and then we shall bear, believe me, the noblest part of all in the history of our civil wars."

Morgan had hardly uttered this chivalric axiom, expressive of a desire which had every chance of accomplishment, when three masonic blows were struck upon the door by which he had lately entered.

"Gentlemen," said the monk who seemed to take the part of president, "put on your masks and hoods. We never know what may happen."

VIII.

WHERE THE MONEY OF THE DIRECTORY WENT.

Every one hastened to obey. The monks lowered the hoods of their long robes over their faces; Morgan put on his mask.

"Come in," said the superior.

The door opened and the serving brother appeared.

"An emissary from General Georges Cadoudal asks admittance," he said.

"Did he reply to the pass-words?"

"Correctly."

"Then let him enter."

The serving-brother retired by the subterranean passage and reappeared a few moments later, conducting a man who was easily recognized by his costume to be a peasant, and by his square head with its shock of red hair to be a Breton. He advanced into the middle of the circle without appearing in the least intimidated, fixing his eyes on each of the monks in turn, and waiting until one or other of the twelve granite statues should break silence. The president was the first to speak.

"From whom do you come?"

"He who sent me," replied the peasant, "ordered me, in case I was asked that question, to say I was sent by Jehu."

"Are you bearer of a verbal or written message?"

"I am to answer the questions you put to me, and exchange a bit of paper for some money."

"Very good; now for the questions. What are the Brothers in La Vendée doing?"

"They have laid down their arms and are waiting a message from you before taking them up again."

"Why did they lay down their arms?"

"They received the order from his Majesty Louis XVIII."

"There is talk of a proclamation written by the king's own hand; has it been received?"

"Here is a copy."

The peasant gave a paper to the person who was questioning him. The latter opened it and read: —

The war has absolutely no result except that of making the monarchy odious and alarming. Kings who return to their own by bloody means are never loved; these means must therefore be abandoned; confidence must be placed in the triumph of Opinion, which invariably returns of itself to saving principles. "God and the king!" will soon be the rallying cry of all Frenchmen. The scattered elements of royalism must be gathered into one vast sheaf; Vendée must be abandoned to her unhappy fate and learn to walk in a more pacific and less erratic manner. The royalists of the West have done their full duty; those of Paris must now be relied on to bring about the approaching Restoration.

Here the president raised his head and looked at Morgan with a flash of the eye his hood could not wholly conceal.

"Brother," he said, "your wish appears to be accomplished. The royalists of La Vendée and the South will have all the merit of pure devotion."

Then, lowering his eyes to the proclamation, he continued to read on: —

The Jews crucified their king; and since that time they have been wanderers on the earth. The French have guillotined theirs, and they too shall be scattered through the universe.

Given at Blankenbourg, this 25th of August, 1799, on the day of Saint Louis and in the sixth year of our reign.

(Signed) Louis.

The young men looked at each other.

"*Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat*," said Morgan.

"Yes," said the president; "but when those whom Jupiter wishes to destroy represent a principle, they must be sustained not only against Jupiter, but against themselves. Ajax, in the midst of the thunder and lightning, clung to a rock and threatening heaven with his clenched hand, he cried, 'I will escape in spite of all the gods!'" Then, turning to Cadoudal's messenger, he added: —

"What answer did he who sent you here make to that proclamation?"

"Very nearly what you have said yourself. He told me to come here and inform myself whether you determined to hold firm in spite of the king himself."

"By heaven, yes!" cried Morgan.

"We are determined," said the president.

"In that case," replied the peasant, "all is well. Here are the real names of the new chiefs, also their assumed names. The general advises you to use the latter as much as possible in your despatches. He takes that precaution in writing of you."

"Have you the list?" asked the president.

"No; I might have been stopped and the list taken from me. Write down the names yourself; I will dictate them."

The president seated himself at a table, took a pen and wrote, under the dictation of the Breton peasant, the following names: —

"Georges Cadoudal, *Jehu*, or *Roundhead;* Joseph Cadoudal, *Judas Maccabæus;* Lahaye Saint-Hilaire, *David;* Burban-Malabry, *Brave-la-mort;* Poulpiquez, *Royal-Carnage;* Bonfils, *Brise-Barrière;* Dampherné, *Piquevers;* Duchayla, *la Couronne;* Duparc, *le Terrible;* la Roche, *Mithridates;* Puisaye, *Jean le Blond.*"

"And those are the successors of Charette, Stofflet, Cathelineau, Bonchamp, d'Elbée, Rochejaquelin, and Lescure!" cried a voice.

The Breton turned round to see who had spoken.

"If they get themselves killed like their predecessors," he said, "what more can you ask?"

"A fair question," said Morgan; "so that — "

"So that," interrupted the peasant, "as soon as our general knows your determination, he will take up arms."

"And if our answer had been in the negative," asked another voice, "what then?"

"So much the worse for you," replied the peasant. "In any case, the insurrection is fixed for October 20."

"Well then," said the president, "thanks to us he will have the means to pay his army for one month. Where is your receipt?"

"Here," said the peasant, drawing from his blouse a paper on which were written these words: —

Received of our Brothers in the South and East, to be employed for the Cause, the sum of . . .

GEORGES CADOUDAL.
General commanding the royalist army of Brittany.

The sum was left blank.

"Do you know how to write?" asked the president.

"Enough to fill in those few missing words."

"Well then, write, 'one hundred thousand francs.'"

The Breton wrote as he was told. Then handing the paper to the president, he said: —

"There is the receipt; where is the money?"

"Stoop and pick up that bag at your feet; it contains sixty thousand francs." Then, addressing one of the monks, he added, "Montbard, where are the other forty thousand?"

The monk thus addressed opened a closet and took therefrom a bag rather less well filled than the one that Morgan had brought in, but which contained, nevertheless, the good round sum of forty thousand francs.

"That makes up the total," said the monk.

"Now, my friend," said the president, "get something to eat, and rest yourself; to-morrow you will start on your return."

"No, I am wanted over there," said the Breton. "I

can eat, and sleep too, on horseback. Adieu, gentlemen; Heaven keep you!" So saying, he went toward the door by which he had entered.

"Wait," said Morgan.

The messenger stopped.

"News for news," continued Morgan. "Tell General Cadoudal that General Bonaparte has left the army in Egypt; he landed day before yesterday at Fréjus and will be in Paris in three days. My news is fully worth yours. What do you think of it?" he added, turning to the conclave.

"Impossible!" cried all the monks, with one voice.

"Yet nothing is more certain, gentlemen; I heard it from our friend Leprêtre, who saw him changing horses at Lyon one hour before me, and recognized him."

"What has he come for?" asked several voices.

"We shall know some day," said Morgan. "Perhaps he has only gone to Paris to keep out of sight."

"Don't lose a moment in carrying that news to our brothers in the West," said the president to the peasant. "A moment ago I wished to keep you; now I tell you to go, — and go quickly."

The peasant bowed and went out. The president waited till the door was closed.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the news that Morgan has brought is so serious that I shall propose a special measure."

"What is it?" asked The Company of Jehu, with one voice.

"It is that one of us, chosen by lot, shall go to Paris and keep the rest of us informed, with our secret cipher, of all that happens."

"Agreed!" they cried.

"In that case," resumed the president, "let us each write our name on a slip of paper, put the slips in a hat, and the first name drawn shall go."

The young men, one and all, went to the table, wrote

their names on squares of paper, which they rolled and threw into a hat. The youngest of them was told to draw. He drew one of the rolls and handed it to the president, who unfolded it.

"Morgan," he read.

"What are my instructions?" asked the young man.

"Remember," replied the president, with a solemnity to which the cloistral arches gave an added grandeur, "remember that you bear the name and title of Comte de Sainte-Hermine, that your father was guillotined on the place de la Révolution, and your brother killed in Condé's army. *Noblesse oblige.* Those are your instructions."

"And what else?" asked the young man.

"For the rest," said the president, "we rely on your principles and your loyalty."

"Then, my friends, allow me to say good-bye at once. I must start for Paris at dawn, and I have a visit I must pay before I go."

"Go," said the president, opening his arms. "I embrace you in the name of the Brotherhood. To another I should say, Be brave, persevering, active; to you I say, Be prudent!"

The young man accepted the fraternal embrace, smiled to his friends, shook hands with two or three of them, wrapped his cloak about him, pulled his hat over his eyes, and departed.

IX.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

Morgan's horse had already, under the possibility of immediate departure, been washed, rubbed down, dried, and fed with a double ration of oats. It was now standing ready, saddled and bridled, and the young man had only to ask for it. He was no sooner in the saddle than the gate opened as if by magic; the horse sprang forth eagerly, forgetting his first trip and ready to make another.

Morgan paused for a moment undecided whether to turn to the right or the left. He finally turned to the right, followed for a few moments the path which led from Bourg to Seillon, then turned again to the right, cut across the plain, entered an angle of the forest which was on his way, left it again on the other side, reached the main road to Pont-d'Ain, followed it for about a mile, and stopped before a group of buildings now called the Maison-des-Gardes. One of these houses bore for a sign a bunch of holly, which meant that it was one of those wayside halting-places where travellers on foot could slake their thirst and rest for a time to recover strength for the long tramp before them. On arriving at the door Morgan stopped, and pulling a pistol from its holster he knocked with the butt-end, as he had done at the gate of the Chartreuse. The good people of the humble tavern were far from being conspirators; he was, therefore, not kept waiting as he had been at the monastery. The wooden shoes of the hostler were presently heard; the gate creaked. But the worthy man who opened it no sooner saw the horseman with his pistols than he tried instinctively to shut it.

"It is I, Patant," said the young man; "don't be frightened."

"Sure enough," said the peasant, "it is you, Monsieur Charles. I 've no fear now; but you know, as Monsieur le curé used to tell us in the days when there was a good God, caution is the mother of safety."

"Yes, Patant, that 's true," said the young man, dismounting and slipping a bit of money into the hostler's hand. "But don't be uneasy; the good God will soon come back, and monsieur le curé too."

"Oh! as for that, I don't know," said the other. "Seems as if there was no one left on high by the way things are going. Will they last long like this, Monsieur Charles?"

"Patant, I promise on my word of honor to do my best to get rid of them. I am not less impatient than you; so I 'll ask you not to go to bed to-night, my good Patant."

"Ah! you know, monsieur, when you come I don't often go to bed. As for the horse — Goodness! you change your horses every day. The last time it was a chestnut, the time before that it was a dapple-gray, and now it 's a black!"

"Yes, I 'm capricious by nature. As to the horse, my dear Patant, he does not want anything. Just take the bridle off, that 's all; don't unsaddle him. Here, put that pistol back in the holster and keep these two carefully till I come back;" and the young man took out those that were in his belt and gave them to the hostler.

"Well done!" said the man, laughing. "How many more barkers?"

"You know, Patant, how unsafe the roads are."

"Indeed I do," Monsieur Charles. "There 's a regular brigandage going on. Why, only last week they stopped and robbed the diligence between Bourg and Geneva."

"You don't say so!" said Morgan. "Do they suspect any one?"

"Oh, it was such a trick! Just fancy, they called themselves The Company of Jesus! Of course I don't believe a

word of that. Who are The Company of Jesus, if not the twelve apostles?"

"True," said Morgan, with his eternally joyous smile. "I don't know of any others."

"Who ever heard the like?" continued Patant; "accuse the twelve apostles of robbing a diligence! Oh, I tell you, Monsieur Charles, we are living in times when nobody respects anything."

And shaking his head like a misanthrope disgusted, if not with life, at least with men, Patant departed, leading the horse toward the stable.

As for Morgan, he watched the hostler till he saw him enter the dark stable; then, turning round the hedge which bordered the garden, he went rapidly down toward a large clump of trees, the lofty tops of which were pencilled upon the sky, with the majesty of things immovable, while their shadows fell upon a charming little country-house, which bore in the neighborhood the rather pompous title of the château des Noires-Fontaines. As Morgan reached it, the hour sounded from the belfry of the village of Montagnac. The young man counted the strokes as they vibrated in the calm and silent atmosphere of the autumn night. It was eleven o'clock. Many things, as we have seen, had happened in the last two hours.

Morgan walked on a few steps, examined the outer wall, seemed to find a familiar spot, and then, inserting the toe of his boot in a cleft made at the juncture of two stones, he sprang like a man who mounts a horse, seized the coping with his left hand, and with a second spring landed astride of the wall, from which with the rapidity of lightning he let himself drop on the other side. All this was done with such agility and quickness and so noiselessly that any one passing at the time would have thought the scene a trick of his vision. Morgan stopped as before and listened, while his eyes tried to pierce the darkness made deeper by the foliage of the aspens and poplars and the heavy shadows of the little wood. All was solitary

and silent. Morgan ventured on his way. We say *ventured* because in the behavior of the young man ever since he had come in sight of the château des Noires-Fontaines, there appeared a hesitation and a timidity which were quite out of keeping with his character. It was evident that, for once at least, he was afraid, and that his fears were not for himself.

He reached the edge of the woods, still moving cautiously; then he came upon a lawn, at the end of which was the little château. There he stopped and examined the front of the building. Only one of the twelve windows on that side was lighted. This was on the second floor, at the corner of the house. A little balcony covered with vines, which were climbing about the wall, clinging to the iron railing, and falling thence in festoons, projected below the lighted window and overhung the garden. On either side of the window, close to the balcony, were trees with large leaves, which met and formed above the cornice a bower of verdure. A Venetian blind, which was raised and lowered by cords, separated the balcony from the window, — a separation which was easily removed at will. It was through the interstices of this blind that Morgan had seen the light.

The first impulse of the young man was to cross the lawn in a direct line; but again the fears of which we spoke withheld him. A linden path ran along the wall and led to the house. He turned out of his way and entered its dark and leafy covert. When he reached the end of it he crossed, as rapidly as a frightened doe, the open space which led to the foot of the house wall, and stood for a moment in the deep shadow cast by the building. Then he stepped back a few paces with his eyes fixed on the window, but not enough to leave the shadow. When he reached a distance he appeared to have calculated he clapped his hands three times.

At the call a shadow darted from the end of the apartment and clung to the window, graceful, flexible, almost transparent.

Morgan renewed the signal. The window was opened instantly, the blind was drawn up, and a beautiful young girl in a night-dress, with her fair hair rippling over her shoulders, appeared in that frame of verdure.

The young man stretched out his arms to her whose arms were stretched to him, and two names, or rather, two cries from the heart crossed in the air from one to the other: —

"Charles!"

"Amélie!"

Then the young man bounded against the wall, caught at the vineshoots, at rough points of the stones, at the edges of the cornice, and was on the balcony in a second.

What these two beautiful young beings said to each other was only a murmur of love lost in an endless kiss. Then, with a gentle exercise of strength, the young man drew the girl with one hand into the room, while with the other he loosened the cords of the blind, which fell noisily behind them. The window was then closed, the light extinguished, and the whole front of the château des Noires-Fontaines became dark and silent.

The darkness and silence lasted about fifteen minutes, and then the rolling of a carriage was heard on the road leading from the highway of Pont-d'Ain to the entrance of the château. There the sound ceased; it was evident that the carriage had stopped before the gates.

X.

ROLAND'S FAMILY.

The carriage which had stopped before the gate was that which brought Roland back to his family, accompanied by Sir John Tanlay.

The household were so far from expecting him that, as we have already seen, all the lights of the house were out, all the windows dark, even that of Amélie. The postilion had cracked his whip in vain for the last five hundred yards; the noise was insufficient to rouse the inhabitants from their first sleep. When the carriage stopped Roland sprang out, without waiting to let down the steps, and tugged at the bell. Five minutes elapsed; Roland rang and rang again, turning to Sir John after every pull to say, "Don't be impatient, Sir John."

At last a window opened and a childish but firm voice cried out: —

"Who is ringing in that way?"

"Ah! is that you, little Édouard?" said Roland; "make haste and let us in."

The child jumped back with a joyous cry and disappeared; but almost immediately his voice was heard in the corridor crying out: —

"Mother! wake up; it is Roland! Sister! wake up; it is the big brother!"

An instant later a key grated in the lock of the door; the bolts were run back. Then a white figure appeared in the portico and flew rather than ran to the gates, which in another moment turned on their hinges and opened. The boy sprang upon Roland's neck and hung there.

"Ah! brother, brother!" he cried, kissing the young man and laughing and crying together. "Ah, big brother Roland! How pleased the mother will be; and Amélie too! Everybody is well. I 'm the least well — Ah! except Michel, who has sprained his leg. Why are not you in uniform? Oh! you are ugly in citizen's clothes. Have you just come from Egypt? Did you bring me some pistols mounted in silver, and a beautiful curved scimitar? No? Then you are not nice, and I won't kiss you any more. Yes, yes, I will. Don't be afraid; I love you still."

And the boy literally smothered his brother with kisses, while he showered him with questions. The Englishman, still seated in the carriage, looked smilingly on the scene through the open door.

In the midst of this fraternal tenderness a woman's voice was heard, — the voice of a mother.

"Where are you, Roland, my dear son?" cried Madame de Montrevel, in a voice of such violent joyous emotion that it was almost painful. "Where is he? Can it be true that he has returned, — that he is not dead? Is he really living?"

The boy, hearing her voice, slipped like an eel from his brother's arms, dropped erect on the grass, and then, as if moved by a spring, bounded toward his mother.

"This way, mother; this way!" he cried, dragging his mother, half-dressed as she was, toward Roland. When Roland saw her he could contain himself no longer, but fell sobbing on her breast, without thinking of Sir John, who felt his Anglican phlegm disperse as he silently wiped away the tears that flowed down his cheeks and moistened his smile. The child, the mother, and Roland made an adorable group of tenderness and emotion.

Presently little Édouard, like a leaf that the wind whirls away, flew from the group, crying out: —

"Sister Amélie! Where is sister Amélie?"

And almost immediately the child was heard kicking

and striking with his fists against a door. There was silence for a few moments. Then the boy shouted from the stairs: —

"Help! help! mother, brother Roland, help! Sister Amélie is ill!"

Madame de Montrevel and her son sprang into the house. Sir John, consummate tourist that he was, always carried a lancet and a bottle of smelling-salts. He now jumped out of the carriage, and, obeying his first impulse, went up on the portico. There he stopped, reflecting that he had not been introduced, — an all-important formula for an Englishman. But it now appeared that the fainting lady whom he had gone to seek was on her way toward him.

The noise her little brother had made brought Amélie to the landing; but the excitement of hearing of Roland's return was, perhaps, too much for her, for after descending a few stairs in an almost automatic manner, her strength gave way, and like a flower that bends, a branch that droops, a scarf that floats, she fell with a sigh, or rather she slid down upon the stairway. It was then that the boy cried out for help.

But at his cry she recovered, if not her strength, at least her will. She raised herself up, and stammering, "Hush, Édouard! hush, for heaven's sake! I am well!" she clung with one hand to the baluster, and leaning the other on the boy's shoulder, she continued to descend the stairs. At the lowest step she met her mother and elder brother. Then with a violent, almost desperate movement she flung both arms round Roland's neck, crying out: —

"Brother! oh, my brother!"

Roland, feeling her weight fall heavily on his shoulder, exclaimed hastily, "Air! air! Give her air; she is fainting!" and carried her out upon the portico. It was this new group, so different from the last, which now met the eyes of Sir John Tanlay.

As soon as she felt the air Amélie revived and lifted her head. Just then the moon in all its splendor shook off a cloud which had veiled it and lighted the girl's pale face. Sir John gave a cry of admiration. We must say here that Amélie, seen thus, was marvellously beautiful. Wearing a long cambric night-dress, which defined a body moulded on the lines of the antique Polyhymnia, her pale head gently inclined upon her brother's breast, the waves of her golden hair floating upon her snowy shoulders, her arm just thrown about her mother's neck, its hand hanging upon the crimson shawl in which Madame de Montrevel had wrapped herself, — a hand of rosy alabaster, — such was Roland's sister as she now appeared to the eyes of Sir John Tanlay.

At the cry of admiration uttered by the Englishman, Roland remembered that he was there, and Madame de Montrevel perceived his presence. As for the child, amazed to see this stranger in his mother's home, he ran rapidly down the steps, stopping on the third from the bottom, — not that he feared to go farther, but because he wished to be on the level of the person he proceeded to question.

"Who are you, monsieur?" he demanded; "and what are you doing here?"

"My boy," said Sir John, "I am a friend of your brother, and I have the silver-mounted pistols and the Damascus blade you asked for."

"Where are they?" said the child.

"In England," replied Sir John; "and it will take some time to get them. But here 's your big brother, who will answer for me that I keep my word."

"Yes, Édouard, yes," said Roland; "if Sir John promises anything he is certain to do it." Then, turning to his mother and sister, he added, "Excuse me, dear mother; excuse me, Amélie,— or rather excuse yourselves as best you can to my friend, Sir John Tanlay; you have made me abominably ungrateful." He grasped Sir John's hand.

"Mother," he said, "this gentleman took occasion the first time that he saw me to do me an eminent service; I know that you never forget such things. I hope, therefore, that you will always remember that Sir John is one of our best friends; and he will give you a proof of it by consenting to bore himself here with us for two or three weeks."

"Madame," said Sir John, "permit me, on the contrary, to say that my desire would be to spend, not two or three weeks, but a whole lifetime here, were that possible."

Madame de Montrevel came down the steps of the portico and offered her hand to the Englishman, which he kissed with a gallantry that was altogether French.

"This house is yours, Sir John," she said. "The day when you enter it is a happy day for us; the day when you leave it a regretful one."

Sir John turned toward Amélie, who, confused by the disorder of her dress before this stranger, was hastily gathering the folds of her wrapper about her throat.

"I speak in my own name and that of my daughter, who is too much overcome by the return of her brother to welcome you herself, as she will do presently," said Madame de Montrevel, coming to Amélie's relief.

"My sister," said Roland, "will permit my friend Sir John to kiss her hand; and he will accept, I am sure, that form of welcome."

Amélie murmured a few words, slowly raised her arm, and held out her hand to Sir John with a smile that was almost painful. The Englishman took it, but feeling how icy and how trembling it was, he did not carry it to his lips, but said, speaking hastily to Roland: —

"Your sister is seriously ill; let us think only of her health. I am something of a doctor, and if she will deign to grant me the favor of feeling her pulse, I shall be more than grateful."

But Amélie, as though she feared that the cause of her

illness might be surmised, withdrew her hand hastily, exclaiming: —

"No, no! Sir John is quite mistaken; joy never causes illness. The joy of seeing my brother once more made me giddy for a moment; but it has all passed off now." Then turning to Madame de Montrevel she added with almost feverish haste, "My dear mother, are we not forgetting that these gentlemen have just made a long journey? They have probably eaten nothing since Lyon, and if Roland has his usual good appetite, he will approve of my leaving you and him to do the honors of the house, while I attend to the less poetic affairs of the housekeeping."

Leaving her mother, as she said, to do the honors, Amélie withdrew to waken the cook and the man-servant, leaving on the mind of Sir John the sort of fairy-like impression which the tourist on the Rhine brings away with him of the Lorelei standing on her rock, a lyre in her hand, the liquid gold of her hair floating in the breeze of evening.

During this time Morgan had again remounted his horse, returning at full gallop to the Chartreuse. He stopped before the portal, and taking his note-book from his pocket he wrote a few lines on a leaf of it, which he tore out, rolled up, and slipped through the keyhole, without taking time to dismount. Then, touching his horse with both spurs and bending almost to the mane of the noble animal, he disappeared in the forest with the mystery and rapidity of Faust on his way to the witches' sabbath. The three lines he had written were as follows: —

"Louis de Montrevel, aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte, arrived to-night at the château des Noires-Fontaines.

"Be careful, Companions of Jehu."

But although he thus warned his friends to be cautious about Louis de Montrevel, Morgan had taken care to draw a cross above the young aide-de-camp's name, which meant

that whatever happened they were to regard the person of that young man as sacred.

The Companions of Jehu had the right to protect a friend in that way without being obliged to explain their reasons for so doing. Morgan used that privilege, and protected the brother of his love.

XI.

THE CHÂTEAU DES NOIRES-FONTAINES.

The château des Noires-Fontaines, to which we have just conducted two of the principal personages of this history, stood in one of the most charming situations of the valley where the town of Bourg was built. The park, of five or six acres covered with venerable trees, was closed on three sides by walls of freestone, one of which opened to the front through a handsome gate of hammered iron, in the style and manner Louis XV.; and on the fourth it was bounded by the little river named the Reyssouse, — a pretty stream which takes its rise at Journaud among the Jura foot-hills, and flowing thence with gentle current from south to north, falls into the Saône at the bridge of Fleurville opposite Pont-de-Vaux, the home of Joubert, who, a month before the time of which we are writing, had been killed at Novi.

Beyond the Reyssouse and along its banks lay, to right and left of the château des Noires-Fontaines, the villages of Montagnat and Saint-Just, commanded farther on by that of Ceyzeriat. Behind this latter hamlet were the graceful silhouettes of the Jura hills, above the crests of which could be seen the blue summits of the mountains of Bugey, which seemed to be standing on tiptoe to see, over their younger sisters' shoulders, what was passing in the valley of the Ain. It was in full view of this enchanting scene that Sir John waked up on the following morning. For the first time in his life, perhaps, the sedate and taciturn Englishman smiled at nature. He fancied himself in one of those beautiful vales of Thessaly celebrated by

Virgil, or beside the sweet shores of Lignon sung by d'Urfé, whose birthplace, no matter what the biographers may say, was falling into ruins not three miles away from the château des Noires-Fontaines.

Sir John was drawn from his contemplations by three taps lightly made upon his door. It was Roland, who came to ask how his guest had passed the night. He found him radiant as the sun, which was dancing on the already yellowing foliage of the chestnuts and the lindens.

"Oh, oh! Sir John," cried Roland, "permit me to congratulate you. I expected to find you as gloomy as those poor Chartreux with their white robes, who used to terrify me in my childhood, — though, indeed, I was never very easy to frighten. Instead of that I find you on this dreary October day as smiling as a May morning."

"My dear Roland," said Sir John, "I am an orphan; I lost my mother the day I was born, and my father when I was twelve years old. At an age when children are sent to school I was master of a fortune of a million a year; but I was alone in the world, with no one that I loved, no one to love me. The tender joys of family life are therefore unknown to me. I went to Cambridge, but there my taciturn, perhaps haughty, nature isolated me among my fellows. At eighteen I began to travel. You who scour the world under the shadow of your flag — that is, the shadow of your country — can have no idea what a miserable thing it is to roam through cities, provinces, and nations, merely to visit a church here, a castle there; to get up at four in the morning at the pitiless command of a guide to see the sunrise from the Righi, or the first touch of its glow upon Ætna; to pass, like a phantom already dead, through that world of living ghosts whom we call men; to know not where to rest; to have no land, to take no root, to find no arm on which to lean, no heart in which to pour one's own! Well, last night, dear Roland, suddenly, in an instant, in a second, the void in my life was filled. I lived in you; the joys I sought were yours. That family

I never had was smiling round you. As I looked at your mother, I said to myself, 'My mother was like that; I am certain of it.' Looking at your sister I said, 'If I had had a sister could I have wished her otherwise?' And when I kissed your brother the thought came over me that I too might have had a child like that, to leave behind me when I leave the world; whereas, with the nature that I know I have, I shall die as I have lived, — sad, surly to others, a burden to myself. Ah! you are happy, Roland; you have a family, you have fame, you have youth, you have that which spoils nothing, even in a man, — you have beauty. No joy is lacking to you; no happiness has failed you. I repeat it, Roland, you are a happy man, most happy."

Roland laughed in the nervous, excitable manner that was usual with him.

"Ha, ha!" he cried; "so this is the English tourist, the superficial traveller, who pauses nowhere, appreciates nothing, gauges nothing, judges everything by its effect on him and his sensations, and says, without even opening the door of the abodes in which the fools we call men live, 'Behind these walls is happiness!' Well, my dear fellow, you see this charming river, don't you, — these flowery meads, those pretty villages? It is a picture of peace, is it not, — of innocence, of fraternity? It is a cycle of Saturn, the age of gold, Eden, paradise! Now let me tell you the truth. It is peopled with beings who have flown at one another's throats. The jungles of the Hoogly, the sedges of Bengal are the home of tigers and of panthers not one whit more ferocious or more cruel than the human beings who live in those smiling villages, on those grassy meads, and along those charming shores. After lauding to heaven in funeral feasts the good, the great, the immortal Marat, — whose body, thank God! they ended by throwing into a sewer, like the carrion that he was and always had been, — after performing these funeral rites, to which each man brought his tears in a vase, behold our good people, our fruit-growers, our poultry-fatteners, suddenly turned about

and declared the Republicans murderers. So then they murdered them in turn, by the tumbrelful, to correct them of that vile defect common to savage and to civilized men, — that of killing their kind. Do you doubt what I say? My dear fellow, on the road over there to Lons-le-Saulnier, they will show you the place, if you inquire, where, not six months ago, they organized a butchery which would turn the stomachs of our most ferocious troopers on a battle-field. Imagine a tumbrel filled with prisoners on their way to Lons-le-Saulnier; it was a cart with railed sides, — one of those huge carts in which they carry calves to market. In that cart were thirty men whose only crime was excitement, and threatening language. They were bound and gagged, heads hanging, and jostled by the bumping of the cart, breasts heaving with thirst, despair, and terror, — miserable beings, who did not even have, as in the times of Nero and Commodus, the fight in the arena, the hand-to-hand struggle with death, — miserable creatures, powerless, motionless, massacred in their fetters, battered not in life only, but in death; their bodies, when the breath had left them, still resounding beneath the bludgeons which broke the bones and jellied the flesh; while women looked on tranquilly and joyously, lifting high their children to clap their little hands, and old men, who ought to have been thinking of a Christian death, helped by their goading cries to make the death of these most wretched men more wretched still. And in the midst of all, a man of seventy, a little man, fresh, dainty, powdered, flipping his lace shirt-frill if an atom of dust settled there, pinching his Spanish tobacco from a golden snuff-box with a diamond monogram, eating his perfumed sugar-plums from a Sèvres bonbonnière given him by Madame du Barry and adorned by the portrait of the giver, this septuagenarian — conceive to yourself the picture, Sir John — dancing with his dainty pumps upon these bodies, upon that mattress of human flesh, wearying his arm, enfeebled by age, in striking with his gold-headed

sane those of the victims who seemed to him not dead enough, not mashed and pounded enough in that cursed mortar. Faugh! I have seen Montebello, I have seen Arcola, I have seen Rivoli, I have seen the Pyramids; I thought never to see anything more terrible. Well, the account my mother gave me last night, after you went to your room, of what has happened here made my hair stand on end. God! that 's enough to explain the spasms of my poor sister."

Sir John looked at Roland and listened with that amazed curiosity which the misanthropic outbursts of his new friend always roused in him. Roland seemed to lurk in the corners of a conversation in order to fall upon the human species whenever he found a chance. He saw the impression he had just made on the Englishman's mind, and he instantly changed his tone, substituting a bitter sort of raillery for his philanthropic wrath.

"It is true," he said, "that with the exception of that dainty aristocrat who finished what the butchers had begun, and dyed in blood the heels of his pumps, the men who performed these massacres were men of low estate, — burghers and 'clowns,' as our forefathers called them; in these days we are more elegant. You saw yourself what happened in Avignon. If you had been told that, you never would have believed it, would you? Those gentlemen who rob coaches pique themselves on their honor. They have two faces, not counting their mask. Sometimes they are Cartouche and Mandrin; at other times Amadis and Galahad. They tell fabulous histories of these highway heroes. My mother told me yesterday of one named Laurent, — you understand, my dear fellow, that their names are all fictitious, to hide their real names as a mask hides the face. This man Laurent had all the qualities of a hero of romance, all the accomplishments, as you English say; for under pretext that you were once Normans you allow us sometimes to enrich our language from yours with a picturesque expression, or some word

which has long and vainly, poor beggar! asked admittance of our own scholars. Well, this Laurent was ideally handsome. He was one of seventy-two of The Company of Jehu who have lately been tried at Yssengeaux. Seventy were acquitted, but he and one other were condemned to death. The released men were sent away at once. Laurent and his companion were put in prison to await the guillotine. Pooh! master Laurent had too pretty a head to fall in the basket. The judges who had judged him, the crowd who waited to see him executed had forgotten what Montaigne calls the corporeal recommendation of beauty. There was a woman belonging to the jailer of Yssengeaux, whether his daughter, sister, or niece, history — for it is history I am telling you, not romance — well, history does not say. At any rate there was a woman, whoever she was, and she fell in love with the handsome prisoner, — so much in love that two hours before the execution, and just as Laurent, expecting the executioner, was asleep or pretending to sleep, his guardian angel entered to him. I can't say how they managed it, for I don't know. The lovers never told, and good reason why; but the end was (now remember, Sir John, this is truth, not fiction), the end was that Laurent was free, but unable to save his friend in the adjoining dungeon. Now Gensonné, you remember, in like circumstances, refused to escape, and preferred to die with the other Girondins; but Gensonné did not have the head of Antinous on the body of Apollo. The handsomer the head the more, you know, you hold on to it. Laurent accepted the freedom that was given to him and escaped; a horse awaited him in the next village. The girl, who might have retarded or embarrassed his escape, was to join him at dawn the next day. Dawn came, but not the angel. It seems our hero thought more of his mistress than he did of his fellow Jehu; he would not go without her. It was six o'clock, — the very hour for his execution. He grew impatient. Three times he turned his horse's head toward the town, and each time

he drew nearer and nearer. A thought occurred to him. Could his mistress have been taken? Would she die for him? He was then in the suburbs. Setting spurs to his horse, he crossed the town, with his face uncovered in the midst of the crowd, who called him by name, amazed to see him free and on horseback, when they were waiting to see him bound in a tumbrel on his way to execution. At that moment he caught sight of his angel pushing her way through the crowd, not to see him executed but to join him. He spurred his horse, bounded toward her, knocking over with the breast of his Bayard two or three clowns who were in his way, caught her, swung her to the pommel of his saddle with a cry of joy, and waving his hat disappeared, like M. de Condé at the battle of Lens; and all the people applauded, and the women thought the action fine, and fell in love with the hero on the spot."

Roland paused, and observing that Sir John kept silence, he questioned him by a look.

"Go on," said the Englishman; "I am listening. And as I am sure you are telling me all that in order to come to something else, I await your point."

"Ha! ha!" said Roland, laughing, "you are right, my dear fellow; and you know me as if we had been schoolmates. Well, what idea do you suppose has been rolling in my brain all night? It is that of getting a nearer look at these gentlemen of The Company of Jehu."

"Yes, I see; as you did not get killed by M. de Barjols, you want to try your chance of being killed by M. Morgan."

"Or any other of them," said the young officer, tranquilly; "for I have nothing against M. Morgan; quite the contrary, though my first impulse when he came into the room and made his little speech was to fly at his throat and choke him with one hand, and tear off his mask with the other."

"Now that I know you, my dear Roland, I wonder why you did not put so fine a project into execution."

"It was not my fault, I swear to you. I was just springing up when my companion held me back."

"So there are persons who can restrain you?"

"Not many; but one man can."

"Do you regret it?"

"No, indeed, I do not. The brave fellow did the business with such coolness that I admired him. I love brave men instinctively. If I had not killed M. de Barjols I should have liked to make a friend of him. It is true I could n't tell how brave he was till I had killed him — But let us talk of something else; that duel is one of my painful thoughts. Besides, all this is n't what I came for. I did not disturb you to talk about The Company of Jehu, or the adventures of M. Laurent; I came to ask how you would like to spend your time. I 'll cut myself in quarters to amuse you, my dear guest, though I have two disadvantages on my side, — this region, which is not amusing; and your nationality, which is not amusable."

"I have told you already, Roland," said Sir John, taking the young man's hand, "that I regard the château des Noires-Fontaines as a paradise."

"I agree to that; but still, in the fear that you may soon find paradise monotonous, I wish to do my best to amuse you. Do you like archæology, — you who have Westminster Abbey and Canterbury? We have a marvel here, the church at Brou, — a wonder of sculptured lace by Colomban. There is a legend about it which I will tell you some evening when you can't go to sleep. You will see there the tombs of Marguerite de Bourbon and Philippe le Beau, also that of Marguerite of Austria; and I will puzzle you with the problem of its motto: 'Fortune, infortune, fort'une,' which I claim to have solved by a Latinized version: *Fortuna, infortuna, forti una.* But do you like fishing, my dear friend? There 's the Reyssouse at your feet, and close at hand a collection of lines and flies belonging to Édouard, and a collection of nets belonging to Michel. If you prefer hunting, the forest of Seillon is

near by. Hunting, properly so called, of course you must renounce; I speak of shooting. In the days of my old bogies, the Chartreux monks, the forest teemed with wild-boars, hares, and foxes. Nobody hunts there now, for the reason that the forest belongs to the government; and the government, at this particular time, is nobody. However, in my capacity as aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte, I 'll make the attempt. We will see who dares meddle with me if, after chasing the Austrians on the Adige, and the Mameluks on the Nile, I choose to hunt boars and deer and hares and foxes on the Reyssouse. One day of archæology, one day's fishing, and one of hunting, — that will help us along; but there will still be fifteen to think of. Are you hungry?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I hear Édouard on the staircase, running up to tell us that breakfast is ready."

As Roland spoke the door opened and the boy said, "Brother Roland, mother and sister Amélie are waiting breakfast for Sir John and you."

Then catching the Englishman's right hand, he looked carefully at the first joint of the thumb and forefinger.

"What are you looking at, my little friend?" said Sir John.

"I was looking to see if you had any ink on your finger."

"And if I had ink on my fingers what would it mean?"

"That you have written to England, and sent for my pistols and sabre."

"No, I have not yet written," said Sir John; "but I shall write to-day."

"Do you hear, big brother Roland? I 'm to have my pistols and my sabre!"

And the boy, full of delight, presented his firm and rosy cheek to Sir John, who kissed it with the tenderness of a father. Then they went to the dining-room, where Madame de Montrevel and Amélie were awaiting them.

XII.

PROVINCIAL PLEASURES.

The same day Roland put part of his plans for his guest's amusement into execution. He took Sir John to see the church at Brou.

Those who have seen the charming little chapel of Brou know that it is one of the hundred marvels of the Renaissance; those who have not seen it must often have heard that said. Roland, who expected to do the honors of this historic gem to his English friend, and who had not seen it for seven or eight years, was greatly disappointed when, on arriving in front of the building he found the niches of the saints empty and the carved figures of the portal decapitated. He asked for the sexton; people laughed at him. Sexton! there was no sexton. He then asked to whom he should go to get the keys. They sent him to the captain of the gendarmerie. The captain was not far off, for the cloister of the church had been turned into a barrack.

Roland went up into the captain's room and made himself known as aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte. The officer, with the passive obedience of a subaltern, gave Roland the keys and followed behind him. Sir John, meantime, was waiting before the porch, admiring, in spite of the mutilation to which they had been subjected, the exquisite details of the frontal.

Roland opened the door and stepped back in amazement. The church was literally stuffed with hay.

"What is all this?" he said to the captain of gendarmes.

"A precaution taken by the municipality."

"A precaution? — what for?"

"To save the church. They were going to pull it down; but the mayor issued a decree declaring that in expiation of the false worship for which it had served it should now be used to store hay."

Roland burst out laughing, and turning to Sir John, he remarked: —

"The church was well worth seeing, my dear friend; but I think that what the captain tells us is more interesting still. You can find in many places — Strasbourg, or Cologne, or Milan — churches or cathedrals which equal the church at Brou, but where will you find an administration idiotic enough to think of destroying such a relic, or a mayor clever enough to save it by making it a barn? A thousand thanks, captain; here are your keys."

"Did I not tell you at Avignon the first time I had the pleasure of seeing you," said Sir John, "that the French were the most amusing people upon earth?"

"This time you are too polite," said Roland; "you ought to have said idiotic instead of amusing. Listen: I can comprehend the political cataclysms which have convulsed our society for a thousand years; I comprehend the communes, the *pastoreaux*, the Jacquerie, the *maillotins*, the League, the Fronde, the *dragonnades*, the Revolution; I can understand the 14th of July, the 5th and 6th of October, the 20th of June, the 10th of August, the 2d and 3d of September, the 21st of January, the 31st of May, the 30th of October, and the 9th Thermidor; I comprehend the tidal wave of Revolution which rushes onward and cannot be arrested, and its ebb, which carries with it the ruins of the institutions itself has wrecked. I can comprehend all that. War, too, I comprehend, — lance against lance, sword against sword, man against man, people against people; I can understand the deadly rage of victors, the bloody reactions of the vanquished, the political volcanoes which rumble in the bowels of the globe, and shake the earth and topple over thrones, upset monarchies,

and roll heads and crowns on scaffolds, — but what I cannot comprehend is the destruction of inanimate things, the mutilation of granite, the casting down of monumental works which belong neither to those who destroy them nor to the age in which they are destroyed, — the pillage of that gigantic library where the antiquary may read, as in a book, the archæological history of a country. Oh, the vandals! the barbarians! — worse than that, the idiots! who revenge the Borgia crimes and the debauches of Louis XV. on stone! How well those Pharaohs and Cheops knew men as the most perverse, destructive, and evil of animals, when they built their pyramids, not with tracery or carvings, not with pinnacles or spires, but with solid blocks of granite fifty feet long. How they must have chuckled in the depths of those sepulchres, against which time has dulled its scythe and the pachas worn their finger-nails in vain. Let us build pyramids, Sir John. They are neither difficult as architecture, nor beautiful as art; but they are solid, and that enables a general to say after a lapse of four thousand years, 'Soldiers, from the apex of these monuments forty centuries are looking at you!' Upon my honor, I long at this moment for a windmill that I might run a tilt against it."

And Roland, bursting into his accustomed laugh, tried to drag off Sir John in the direction of the château. But Sir John resisted.

"Is there nothing to see here except the church?" he asked.

"Formerly," said Roland, "that is, before they made it a hay-loft, I should have asked you to go down into the vaults of the Dukes of Savoie. We might have hunted together for a subterranean passage nearly three miles long, which is said to exist there, and which communicates, so they say, with the grotto of Ceyzeriat. It would have been like a scene of your Anne Radcliffe in the 'Mysteries of Udolpho;' but you see it is impossible. Come."

"Where are you taking me now?"

"Faith, I don't know. Ten years ago I should have taken you to see the farms where they fattened pullets. The pullets of Bresse, you must know, have a European reputation. Bourg was an annex to the great coop Strasbourg. But during the Terror the fatteners of poultry had to shut up shop; you were taken for an aristocrat if you ate a chicken, and you know the fraternal chorus, 'Ah! ça ira, ça ira, les aristocrats à la lanterne!' After the fall of Robespierre the pullets were fattened again; but since the 18th Fructidor France has been commanded to grow thin, fowls and all. However, in default of fat fowls, I can show you one thing, — the place where they executed those who ate them."

"Look here," said Sir John, "are you or are you not a Republican?"

"I, not a Republican! Come, come! I count myself an excellent Republican. I am capable of burning my fist off like Mucius Scævola, or jumping into the gulf like Curtius to save the Republic; but I have unluckily a sense of the ridiculous. The absurdity of things catches me on the side, and tickles me and makes me laugh. I accept very readily the constitution of 1791; but when poor Hérault de Séchelles wrote to the director of the National Library to send him a copy of the laws of Minos, so that he might make a constitution on the model of the laws of the Island of Crete, I thought it was going rather far, and that we ought to content ourselves with those of Lycurgus. I think January, February, and March, mythological as they are, every bit as good as Nivôse, Pluviôse, and Ventôse. I can't see why when people were called Antoine or Chrysostome in 1789, they should be called Brutus and Cassius in 1793. Here! look here, Sir John; here 's a good honest street, which used to be called the rue des Halles. There was nothing indecent or aristocratic in that, was there? Well, now it is called — Wait a minute" (Roland looked up at a wall); "it is called the rue de la Révolution. Here 's another, that used to be the

rue Notre Dame; it is now the rue du Temple. Why rue du Temple? Probably to perpetuate the memory of the place where that infamous Simon tried to teach cobbling to the heir of sixty-three kings, — perhaps I am wrong by one or two; but if so, excuse it. Now here 's another street. It used to be the rue Crèvecœur, a very honorable name in Bresse and Burgundy and Flanders; it is now the rue de la Fédération. Federation is a fine thing, but Crèvecœur was a fine name. And then, do you see, it leads, to-day, straight to the place de la Guillotine; that is all wrong, in my opinion. I don't want any streets to lead to such places. This one, you see, had an advantage; it is only about three hundred feet from the prison, — a fact which economized and still economizes the horse and cart of Monsieur de Bourg — By the bye, remark, if you please, that the executioner remains aristocratic and keeps the *de*. The square is admirably arranged for spectators, and my ancestor Montrevel, whose name it bears, possibly foreseeing its destiny, solved the great problem, still unsolved in theatres, of every spectator being able to see everywhere. If my head is ever cut off, — which may very well happen in these days, — I shall have but one regret, that of being less well placed and seeing less than others. Now, let us go up these steps; here we are in the place des Lices. Our revolutionists have left it its name, because, in all probability, they don't know what it means. I don't know much better than they; but I think I remember that a certain Sieur d'Estavayer challenged some Flemish count, and the fight took place in this square. And now, my dear Sir John, here is the prison, which ought to give you some idea of human vicissitudes. Gil Blas did n't change his condition as often as this building has changed purposes. Before Cæsar came it was a temple of the Gauls; Cæsar made it a Roman fortress; an unknown architect transformed it into a military work of the Middle Ages; the lords of Baye, following Cæsar's example, remade it into a fortress. The princes of Savoie used it as a resi-

dence; here lived the great-aunt of Charles V., when she came to visit her church at Brou, which she never had the satisfaction of seeing finished. Finally, after the treaty of Lyon, when Bresse returned to France, they made it into a prison with the law-courts attached. Wait a moment for me here, if you don't like the grating of hinges and the squeak of bolts. I have a visit to pay to a certain cell."

"The grating of hinges and the squeak of bolts is not a very enlivening noise, but no matter, — as you have evidently undertaken my education show me your cell."

"Well, come in quickly, then; I see a crowd of persons who mean to speak to me."

In fact, little by little, a sort of rumor seemed to spread through the town. Persons came out of their houses, or formed in groups on the streets; and they all looked at Roland with curiosity. He rang the bell of the iron gate, situated then where it is now, but at that time opening into the prison yard. A jailer came to unlock it.

"Ah, ah! so you are still here, père Courtois," said the young man. Then turning to Sir John, he added, "Is n't that a good name for a jailer?"

The jailer looked at Roland in amazement.

"How comes it," he said, through the railings, "that you know my name, and I don't know yours?"

"Bless me! I not only know your name, but I know your opinions. You are an old royalist, père Courtois."

"Monsieur," said the jailer, much frightened, "don't make bad jokes, if you please; and say at once what you want."

"Well, my dear old Courtois, I want to see the cell where they put my mother and sister, Madame and Mademoiselle de Montrevel."

"Ah!" cried the old man; "so it 's you, Monsieur Louis, is it? You might well say I knew you. But you 've grown a fine, handsome fellow!"

"Do you think so, père Courtois? Well, the same to

you; for your daughter Charlotte is, I declare, a fine, handsome girl. Charlotte is my sister's maid, Sir John."

"And she is very happy there," said old Courtois, "much better off than here. But they tell me you are aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte."

"Alas! Courtois, I have that honor. You would rather I were aide-de-camp to M. le Comte d'Artois or M. le Duc d'Angoulême, would n't you?"

"Please hold your tongue, Monsieur Louis." Then putting his mouth to the young man's ear, he added, "Tell me, is it really true?"

"What?"

"That General Bonaparte passed through Lyon yesterday?"

"There must be some truth in the news, for this is the second time I have heard it. Ah! I understand now why all the good people in the streets looked at me with such curiosity and seemed to want to question me. They are like you, père Courtois; they want to know how the return of General Bonaparte will affect them."

"Do you know what else is said, Monsieur Louis?"

"Is there anything else, père Courtois?"

"I should think so, indeed; but they only whisper it."

"What is it?"

"They say he is going to demand from the Directory the throne of his Majesty Louis XVIII. and the king's return to it; and that if the citizen Gohier as president does n't choose to give it up, General Bonaparte will take it by main force."

"Oh, pooh!" said the young officer, with an incredulous look that was half ironical.

But old Courtois insisted on his news with affirmative nods.

"Well, you may be right," said the young man; "but this is the first I have heard of it. Come, now you know me, open the gate."

"Of course I will! What the devil am I about?"

And the jailer opened the gate with much heartiness. The young man entered, and Sir John followed him. Courtois locked the gate carefully; then Roland followed him, and Sir John followed Roland. The Englishman was beginning to get accustomed to the excitable character of the young man. The spleen, to which he attributed the youth's caprices, is misanthropy without the sulkiness of Timon or the wit of Alceste.

The jailer crossed the prison yard, which is separated from the law-courts by a wall fifteen feet high, with an opening in the middle to admit prisoners, without taking them round by the street; this was closed by a massive oaken door. The jailer, we say, crossed the whole yard, and went up some steps in the left angle, which led to the interior of the prison.

If we insist on these details, it is because we shall return to the same spot hereafter, and we wish it to be not unfamiliar to our readers when that time comes.

The steps led first into the antechamber of the prison, — that is to say, the porter's hall of the lower courtroom. From this hall ten steps led down into an inner courtyard separated from a third courtyard, which was that of the prisoners, by a wall like the one first mentioned; only, this one had three doors instead of one. At the farther end of this courtyard a passage led to the jailer's own room, which opened into a second passage, on which were the cells, which were called, picturesquely, cages. The jailer stopped at the first of these cages.

"It was here," he said, striking the door, "that I locked up Madame, your mother, and Mademoiselle your sister, so that if the dear ladies wanted anything they could knock for me or Charlotte."

"Is there any one in there now?"

"No one."

"Then please open the door and let us go in. This is my friend, Sir John Tanlay, a philanthropic Englishman, who is travelling about to see if the French prisons are any better than the English ones. Go in, Sir John."

Père Courtois having opened the door, Roland pushed his friend into a cage measuring exactly ten feet in every direction.

"Oh, oh!" cried Sir John; "this is lugubrious!"

"Do you think so? Well, this is where my mother, the noblest woman in the world, and my sister spent six weeks, with the prospect of leaving it only to make the little trip out there to the guillotine. That was five years ago, and my sister was scarcely twelve years old."

"What crime had they committed?"

"Oh, a monstrous crime! At the anniversary festival which the town of Bourg thought proper to give in commemoration of the death of Marat, my mother refused to let my sister be one of the virgins who bore the tears of France in vases. Poor woman! she thought she had done enough for the nation in giving it the blood of her son and husband, which was then flowing in Italy and Germany. She was mistaken. The nation claimed, it appeared, the tears of her daughter. She thought it too much, especially when those tears were to flow for the editor of the 'Ami du peuple.' It resulted that on the very evening of the fête my mother was declared accused. Fortunately, Bourg had not attained to the rapidity of Paris. A friend we had in the police-court made the matter drag along until, one fine day, the fall and death of Robespierre were made known. That interrupted a good many things, among others the guillotinades. Our friend in the police-court made the authorities understand that a wind of clemency was blowing from Paris; they waited fifteen days, and on the sixteenth they came and told my mother and sister that they were free. So you understand, my dear fellow (and this involves the highest philosophical reflection), that if Mademoiselle Teresa Cabarrus had not come from Spain, if she had not married Monsieur Fontenay, parliamentary counsellor, if she had not been arrested and brought before the pro-consul Tallien, son of the butler of the Marquis de Bercy, ex-notary's clerk, ex-foreman of a

printing-office, ex-express-porter, ex-secretary to the Commune of Paris, if the said Teresa had not found favor in the sight of the pro-consul and caused him to fall in love with her, if she had not been imprisoned, if she had not found a way to send the pro-consul a dagger and these words, 'If the tyrant does not die to-day, I die to-morrow,' if Saint-Just had not been arrested in the middle of his speech, if Robespierre had not on that day had a frog in his throat, if Garnier (de l'Aube) had not said to him, 'It is the blood of Danton that is choking you,' if Louchet had not thereupon shouted for his arrest, and if he had not been arrested, released by the Commune, arrested again, had his jaw broken by a pistol-shot, and been executed the next day, — my mother would, in all probability, have had her head cut off because she would n't let her daughter weep for Marat into one of the dozen lachrymal vases which Bourg was desirous of filling with its tears. Good-bye, Courtois. You are a worthy fellow; you gave my mother and sister a little water to put with their wine, a little meat to put with their bread, a little hope to put in their hearts; you lent them your daughter to sweep their cell. All that deserves a fortune. Unhappily, I am not rich; but there are fifty louis I happen to have with me. Come, Sir John, let us go."

And the young man carried off his companion before the jailer recovered from his surprise and found time either to thank the giver or return the gift, which, it must be said would have been a remarkable proof of disinterestedness in a jailer, especially one whose opinions were opposed to those of the government he served.

Leaving the prison, Roland and Sir John found the place des Lices crowded with people who had heard of Bonaparte's return to France and were crying out "Vive Bonaparte!" — some because they really admired the victor of Arcola, Rivoli, and the Pyramids; others because they had been told, like père Courtois, that the victor was to claim the throne and give it to his Majesty Louis XVIII.

Roland and Sir John, having now visited all that the town of Bourg offered of interest, returned to the château des Noires-Fontaines. Madame de Montrevel and Amélie had gone out. Roland installed Sir John in an easy-chair and asked him to wait for him. At the end of five minutes he returned with a sort of pamphlet of grayish paper, very badly printed, in his hand.

"My dear Sir John," he said, "you looked a little sceptical about that festival in honor of Marat which I mentioned just now, which nearly cost the lives of my mother and sister, so I bring you the programme. Read it, and while you are doing so I will go and see what they have done with my dogs; for I presume you would rather go a-hunting than a-fishing, for your next diversion."

He went off, leaving in Sir John's hand a copy of the decree of the municipality of the town of Bourg, instituting the funeral festival in honor of Marat, on the anniversary of his death.

XIII.

THE WILD-BOAR.

Sir John was just finishing that interesting bit of history when Madame de Montrevel and her daughter returned. Amélie, who did not know how much had been said about her between the Englishman and her brother, was surprised by the manner in which that gentleman fixed his eyes upon her.

She seemed to him more lovely than ever. He could well understand the mother who, at the risk of life, was not willing that that exquisite creature should profane her youth and beauty by serving in a show of which Marat was the deity. He remembered the cold, damp dungeon he had lately seen, and he shuddered as he thought that the delicate white ermine before his eyes had been locked into that dismal place, without sun or air, for six weeks. He looked at the throat, too long perhaps, but swan-like, full of suppleness and grace in its very exaggeration, and he remembered the sad words of that poor Princesse de Lamballe as she felt her slender neck and said, "It will not give much trouble to the executioner."

The thoughts that thus succeeded each other in Sir John's mind gave an expression to his countenance that was not habitual to it. Madame de Montrevel noticed this and asked what troubled him. He then related to her his visit to the prison and Roland's pious pilgrimage to the cell where his mother and sister had been imprisoned. Just as he ended his account a view-halloo sounded without, and Roland returned, his hunting-horn at his lips.

"My dear friend," he cried, "thanks to my mother, we shall have a splendid hunt to-morrow."

"Thanks to me?" said Madame de Montrevel.

"How so?" inquired Sir John.

"I left you to go and see about my dogs. I had two, Barbichon and Ravaude, excellent animals, male and female."

"Oh!" said Sir John; "they are not dead, I hope?"

"Ah, yes; but imagine what my good mother has done" (and he took Madame de Montrevel's head in his two hands and kissed her on both cheeks); "she would not let them drown a single puppy, because, she said, they were the dogs of my dogs. So the result is, my dear friend, that the pups and grand-pups and great-grand-pups of Barbichon and Ravaude are as numerous in the land as the descendants of Ishmael, and there is not a pair of dogs only, but a whole kennel at your service, — twenty-five hounds of one breed, all black as moles, with white feet, fire in their eyes and hearts, and a regiment of cornet tails it would do you good to see."

Thereupon Roland gave a flourish on his trumpet, which brought in little Édouard at full speed.

"Oh!" he cried breathlessly, "are you going to hunt to-morrow, brother Roland? Can I go? Yes, I 'm going! I 'm going!"

"But do you know what kind of hunt it is?"

"No; I only know I 'm going."

"We are going to hunt a boar."

"Oh, joy!" cried the child, clapping his hands vigorously.

"But you are crazy!" said Madame de Montrevel, turning pale.

"How so, mamma? Please say."

"Because it is very dangerous to hunt a wild-boar."

"Not so dangerous as to hunt war; and my big brother Roland has got back safe from that. I shall get back safe to-morrow."

"Roland," said Madame de Montrevel, while Amélie, lost in thought, took no part in the discussion, "Roland,

make Édouard listen to reason; tell him he has n't common-sense."

But Roland, who recognized himself in the child, instead of blaming him smiled at his boyish courage.

"I would take you willingly," he said; "but before you hunt you must learn how to manage a gun."

"Ho, ho! Monsieur Roland," cried Édouard, "come down into the garden and put your hat at a hundred paces, and I 'll show you how to manage a gun."

"Dreadful child!" cried Madame de Montrevel, trembling all over; "where did you learn it?"

"Why, from the gunsmith at Montagnat, where papa's guns and Roland's are. You ask me sometimes what I do with my money. Well, I buy powder and balls and practise how to kill Austrians and Arabs like my brother Roland."

Madame de Montrevel threw up her hands.

"Ah, mother," cried Roland, "you can't help it; blood tells. There was never a Montrevel afraid of powder. You shall go with us to-morrow, Édouard."

"And I," said Sir John, "will arm you to-day like a regular huntsman. I have a charming little rifle which I will give you; it will keep you contented till your sabre and pistols come."

"Well, does that please you, Édouard?" asked Roland.

"Yes; but when will he give it to me? If he has to write to England for it, I sha'n't believe him."

"No, my young friend, I have only to get my gun-case out of the carriage and open it; and that is soon done."

"Then let us get it now."

"Very good!" said Sir John; and he went out, followed by Édouard.

A moment later Amélie, still absorbed in thought, rose and left the room.

Madame de Montrevel tried to persuade Roland not to take his little brother on the morrow. But Roland explained that if the boy was to be a soldier like his father

and brother, the sooner he learned the management of weapons and grew familiar with powder and ball, the better. The discussion was not ended when Édouard came running back with his rifle slung over his shoulders.

"See, brother," he said to Roland, "see the beautiful present Sir John has given me!" And he looked back gratefully at the giver, who stood in the doorway vainly searching with his eyes for Amélie.

It was indeed a magnificent present. The rifle, designed with that sobriety of ornament and simplicity of form peculiar to English weapons, was of the finest finish. Like Sir John's pistols, the extreme accuracy of which Roland had already appreciated, it was made by Manton, and carried a bullet of 24 calibre. It must have been intended for a woman; and this was proved by the shortness of the butt-end and the velvet pad on the trigger. This original destination of the weapon made it suitable for the figure of a boy of twelve. Roland took it from the shoulder of his little brother, looked at it knowingly, tried its action, sighted it, threw it from one hand to the other, and then, giving it back to Édouard, said: —

"Thank Sir John again; he has given you a rifle that is worthy of the son of a king. Let us go and try it."

All three went out to do as Roland said, leaving Madame de Montrevel as sad as Thetis when she saw Achilles in his woman's garment pull the sword of Ulysses from its scabbard. A quarter of an hour later Édouard returned triumphantly. He brought his mother a bit of pasteboard of the circumference of a hat, in which he had put ten balls out of twelve at fifty paces. The two men had stayed behind in the park, conversing.

Madame de Montrevel listened to Édouard's slightly boastful account of his prowess, looking at him with that wistful, saintly sadness of mothers to whom glory is no compensation for the blood it sheds. Oh! ungrateful indeed is the child who has once seen that look fixed upon him and does not eternally remember it. Then, after a few seconds

of painful contemplation she pressed her youngest child to her heart, and murmured, sobbing: —

"You, too, — oh, yes; some day you too will desert your mother."

"Yes, mother," said the boy, "to become a general like my father, or an aide-de-camp like brother Roland."

"And to be killed as your father was killed and as your brother will be."

For that was a never-ending dread to this poor woman, added to her other anxieties, among which we must class the pallor and absent-mindedness of Amélie.

Amélie was just seventeen; her earliest years were those of a laughing child, healthy and joyous. The death of her father had cast for a time a black veil over her youth and gayety; but such spring storms had passed. The smile, the sunshine of the dawning life returned like that of nature to sparkle on the dew of the heart which we call tears. Then suddenly one day — it was about six months before our story opens — the girl's face saddened, her cheeks grew pale, and just as birds that migrate fly to other climes in wintry weather, the girlish laughter of those rosy lips departed, never to return.

Madame de Montrevel questioned her daughter; but Amélie declared herself the same as ever. She tried to smile; but as a stone thrown into a lake makes rings upon the water which slowly disappear, the smiles, roused only by her mother's uneasiness, faded little by little from her face. With a mother's instinct Madame de Montrevel thought of love; but who could love her, — whom could she love?" No visitors were ever admitted to the château des Noires-Fontaines; political troubles had put an end to all society, and Amélie went nowhere. Madame de Montrevel could go no farther than conjecture. Roland's return had given her a momentary hope; but even that was disappearing as she watched the effect which this event was evidently producing on her daughter. It was no longer a sister, but a spectre who met him. Since Roland's arrival

Madame de Montrevel had watched Amélie incessantly, and with sorrowful astonishment she saw the effect produced on the sister by the brother's presence; she, whose eyes were formerly always seeking Roland and always full of love, now seemed to see him with a sort of terror. Only a few moments since, Amélie had profited by her first chance to leave the salon and retire to her own room, the only spot in the house where she seemed to feel at ease, and where, for the last six months, she had passed most of her time. The dinner-bell alone had the power to bring her out of it, and even then she delayed her coming till the last stroke sounded.

The day had been spent by Roland and Sir John in visiting Bourg, as we have seen, and in making preparations for the hunt of the morrow. From early morning until mid-day they were to beat the woods; from mid-day till nightfall they were to hunt the boar. Michel, the gardener, an experienced huntsman, just now tied to his chair by a sprain, felt better at the prospect, and had himself hoisted on to a little horse kept for the errands of the house, that he might collect the beaters from Saint-Just and Montagnat. He himself, being unable either to beat or hunt, meant to stay with the hounds and with the horses of Sir John and Roland and Édouard's pony about the middle of the forest, which was intersected by one good road and two practicable pathways. The beaters who could not follow the hunt were to return to the château with the game-bags.

The next morning at six the beaters were ready before the door. Michel was not to start until eleven with the dogs and horses.

The château des Noires-Fontaines is at the very edge of the forest of Seillon. The sport could begin almost as soon as they left the gates. As the battue promised chiefly deer and hares, the guns were loaded with ball. Roland gave Édouard a simple little gun which had been his own when a boy; he had not yet confidence enough in the child to trust him with a double-barrelled weapon. As

for the rifle Sir John had given him the day before, it could only carry cartridges, and was therefore given into Michel's safe keeping, to be returned to him in case they put up a boar for the second part of the hunt. For this part, Roland and Sir John were also to change their guns for double-barrelled rifles and for hunting-knives, pointed as daggers, sharp as razors, which were part of Sir John's arsenal and could either be hung from the belt or screwed on the barrel of the guns, like bayonets.

From the beginning of the battue it was easy to see that the day would be a successful one. A roebuck and two hares were killed at once. Two boars were seen; but in answer to two balls they only shook their bristles and disappeared. Édouard was in the seventh heaven; he had shot the deer. By noon, as agreed upon, the beaters, well rewarded for the trouble they had taken, returned to the château with the game. A sort of bugle was sounded to discover where Michel was. Michel replied to it. In less than ten minutes the three huntsmen had found him with the horses and the hounds.

Michel, it seemed, had seen a boar; he had made his son head it off, and it was now in the woods not a hundred paces distant.

Jacques, the son, was sent to beat the wood with the heads of the pack, Barbichon and Ravaude. At the end of about five minutes the boar was found in his lair. He might have been killed at once, but that would have ended the hunt too quickly; and the huntsmen now launched the whole pack at the animal, who, seeing this troop of little pygmies rushing at him, started away at a slow trot. He crossed the road; Roland gave the view-halloo, and as the animal took the direction of the Chartreuse of Seillon, the three riders followed the path which went through the length of the wood. The boar now led them a chase which lasted till five in the evening, for the beast was evidently unwilling to leave a forest so full of undergrowth.

At last the violent barking of the dogs seemed to show

that the boar was at bay. The spot was not a hundred paces away from the pavilion belonging to the Chartreuse, in one of the most tangled parts of the forest. It was impossible to force the horses through it, and the riders therefore dismounted. The barking of the dogs guided them; from time to time cries and yelps of pain showed that some of the attacking party had gone too near and received the reward of their temerity. About twenty steps from the scene of the drama the hunters began to see the actors in it. The boar was backing against a rock so as not to be attacked from behind; bracing himself on his fore-paws he faced the dogs with his scarlet eyes and his two enormous tusks. The dogs were pressing and tumbling before him, around him, on him, like a moving carpet. Five or six, more or less badly hurt, were staining the battle-field with their blood, though still attacking the boar with a tenacity and courage which might serve as an example to the bravest of men.

Each hunter faced the scene with the characteristic signs of his age, disposition, and nation. Édouard, the most imprudent and also the smallest of the three, finding his little person no obstacle, had scrambled through the undergrowth and arrived the first. Roland, indifferent to danger of any kind, followed him. Sir John, slower, graver, more reflecting, brought up the rear.

No sooner did the boar get sight of the huntsmen than he seemed to pay no more attention to the dogs. He fixed his eyes, gleaming and sanguinary, upon them; but the only movement which he made was the snapping of his jaws, as he brought them together with a threatening sound. Roland looked at the sight for an instant as if inclined to fling himself, knife in hand, into the midst of the group and cut the beast's throat, as a butcher does that of a calf or a pig.

His impulse was so evident that Sir John caught his arm, while Édouard shouted: —

"Oh, brother, let me fire at him!"

Roland controlled himself.

"Very good," he said, leaning his gun against a tree, and using only his knife which he drew from its sheath; "fire! Pay attention now!"

"Don't be afraid," said the child, through his clenched teeth, his face pale but resolute, and lifting the barrel of his rifle to the animal's level.

"If he misses or only wounds him," remarked Sir John, "you know that brute will be upon us before we can see him through the smoke."

"I know that; but I 'm accustomed to hunts like these," replied Roland, his nostrils dilated, his eyes flaming, his lips half-open. "Fire, Édouard!"

The shot followed the order instantly; but on the instant, perhaps before it, the boar, rapid as lightning, sprang upon the child. A second shot was heard. Then, amid the smoke, the angry eyes of the animal were seen gleaming. But as it rushed it met Roland, one knee on the ground, and knife in hand. An instant, and a tangled, formless group rolled on the earth, man and boar, boar and man, clinging together. Then a third shot rang out, followed by a laugh from Roland.

"Ah, Sir John!" he cried; "you 've wasted that powder and ball. Don't you see the brute is ripped up? Only, do get his body off me; he weighs four hundred at least, and he is smothering me."

But before Sir John could stoop to do it, Roland, by a vigorous movement of his shoulders, threw aside the carcass and rose, covered with blood but without a scratch. Little Édouard, whether from want of time or from native courage, had not recoiled an inch. It is true that he was completely protected by his brother, who had flung himself before him. Sir John had sprung aside to take the animal in the flank, and he now looked at Roland, shaking himself after this second duel, with the same astonishment he had felt after the first.

The dogs — those that remained, about twenty of them

— had followed the boar, and were now leaping at his body, trying, but in vain, to tear the mass of erect bristles, which were almost as impenetrable as iron.

"You will see," said Roland, wiping the blood from his face and hands with a cambric handkerchief, "how they will eat him and my knife, too, Sir John."

"True," said Sir John; "where is the knife?"

"In its sheath," said Roland, laughing.

"Ah!" cried the boy, "I see it; there 's only the handle sticking out."

And springing up to the animal, he pulled out the knife which, as he had said, was buried to the hilt. The sharp point, aimed by a calm eye, and driven by a vigorous hand, had pierced to the animal's heart. There were three other wounds. The first, made by the boy's shot, was shown by a bloody furrow above the eye; the ball had been too weak to break the frontal bone. The second came from Sir John's first shot; the ball had taken the animal diagonally and grazed his breast. The third, aimed at close quarters, went through his body, but, as Roland had said, not until after he was killed.

XIV.

AN UNWELCOME COMMISSION.

The hunt was over; darkness was coming on, and the object now was to return home. The horses were near by; they could be heard neighing impatiently. They seemed to be asking why their courage was so doubted that they were not allowed to share in the exciting drama.

Édouard was bent on dragging the boar to the horses, putting it on the back of one of them, and so carrying it back to the château; but Roland pointed out to him that it was much easier to send two men with a barrow to fetch the carcass. Sir John thought so too, and Édouard — who never ceased pointing to the wound in the head and saying, "That 's my shot; I aimed there" — was forced to yield to the will of the majority. The three hunters soon returned to where the horses were fastened, and mounting them, were back at the château des Noires-Fontaines in about ten minutes.

Madame de Montrevel was on the portico watching for them. For over an hour the poor mother had been there, trembling lest some harm had overtaken one or the other of her sons. The moment Édouard spied her he put his pony at a gallop, crying out: —

"Mother! mother! we 've killed a boar as big as a donkey. I fired at his head; you shall see the hole my ball made. Roland stuck his hunting-knife into the boar's belly up to the hilt. Quick! quick! send men to fetch him. Don't be afraid, mother, when you see Roland all covered with blood; it is only the boar's blood. Roland has n't a scratch."

All this was said with his accustomed volubility, while Madame de Montrevel was crossing the open space between the portico and the road to open the iron gates. She meant to take Édouard in her arms; but he, jumping off his pony, caught her round the neck. Roland and Sir John came up at this moment, and just then Amélie appeared on the portico.

Édouard left his mother to fret herself about Roland, whose appearance, all covered with blood, was certainly alarming, and rushed to tell his sister the tale he had rattled off to his mother. Amélie listened with an absent-minded manner, which probably hurt his vanity, for he presently precipitated himself into the kitchen to recount the affair to Michel, who was certain to listen to him eagerly.

Michel was indeed interested to the highest degree; but when Édouard, after telling him the place where the boar was killed, gave him Roland's order to send men to fetch the carcass, he shook his head.

"Well, what?" cried Édouard; "do you refuse to obey my brother?"

"God forbid, Monsieur Édouard; Jacques shall go at once to Montagnat."

"Are you afraid he can't get men?"

"Bah! he could get a dozen. But the trouble is the time of night and the place the carcass is in. You say it is close to the pavilion of the Chartreuse?"

"Not a hundred feet away."

"I had rather it were a couple of miles," replied Michel, scratching his head. "But never mind, I 'll send for the men without telling them where they are going. Once here, hang it! your brother must make them go."

"Yes, yes, yes; let them come here and I 'll make them go, I will!"

"Oh!" said Michel, "if I had n't this cursed sprain I'd go myself; but to-day's work has made it worse. Jacques! Jacques!"

Jacques came, and Édouard only waited to hear the order given that he was to go to Montagnat and fetch men, when he departed and ran to his room to do that which Roland and Sir John were already doing, that is, dress for dinner.

The whole talk at table, as may easily be imagined, was about the day's prowess. Édouard asked nothing better than to tell of it; and Sir John, delighted with the courage, ability, and, above all, the happiness about him, improved upon the child's narrative. Madame de Montrevel shuddered at each detail, and yet she made them repeat it a dozen times. The point that struck her most was that Roland had evidently saved the life of his brother.

"Did you thank him?" she said to the child.

"Thank whom?"

"The big brother."

"Why should I thank him?" asked Édouard. "He did just what I should have done."

"Ah, madame, you cannot help yourself!" said Sir John; "you are a doe who has given birth to a race of lions."

Amélie had also paid great attention to the tale, especially after she heard that the hunters had been close to the Chartreuse. From that moment she listened with anxious eyes, and seemed not to breathe until they told of leaving the woods after the killing.

Just as dinner was over, word was brought that Jacques had returned with two peasants from Montagnat. The peasants wanted exact directions where to find the animal. Roland rose to go out to them; but Madame de Montrevel, who could never see enough of her son, turned to the messenger and said, "Bring those worthy men in here; it is not worth while to disturb Monsieur Roland." Five minutes later the two peasants entered the dining-room, twirling their hats in their hands.

"My men," said Roland, "I want you to go into the

forest of Seillon and bring back the carcass of the boar we have just killed."

"That can be done," said one of them, consulting his companion with a look.

"Yes, that can be done," said the other.

"Don't be uneasy," continued Roland; "you shall not take the trouble for nothing."

"Oh, we are not uneasy," said one of the peasants; "we know you, M. de Montrevel."

"Yes," said the other; "you don't make men work for nothing, any more than your father did. Oh! if all the aristocrats had been like you, there would n't have been a revolution, Monsieur Louis."

"No, that there would n't," said the other, who seemed to be the affirmative echo of his companion.

"Now we want to know just where the animal is," said the first peasant.

"Yes," said the second; "we want to know where it is."

"It is not difficult to find."

"So much the better," said the men.

"You know the pavilion in the forest?"

"Which?" said the first peasant.

"Yes, which?" said the second.

"The pavilion which belongs to the Chartreuse."

The two peasants looked at each other.

"Well, you 'll find the brute about twenty paces from the side of the pavilion toward the Genoud wood."

The peasants looked at each other again.

"Hum!" grunted one.

"Hum!" grunted the other, faithful echo of his comrade.

"Well, what?" asked Roland.

"Confound it!"

"Come, explain yourself; what 's the matter?"

"It is this, Monsieur Louis; we would rather it was the other end of the forest."

"That is a fact," said the other.

"But why the other end of the forest?" continued Roland, impatiently. "It is nine miles from here to the other end, and not one mile to where the boar lies."

"Yes," said the first peasant; "but the place where the boar lies —" He stopped and scratched his head.

"Yes, just so," said the other.

"Just what?" cried Roland.

"It is too near the Chartreuse."

"I told you the pavilion, not the Chartreuse."

"It is all the same; you know, Monsieur Louis, they say there is a subterranean passage from the Chartreuse to the pavilion."

"Yes, there is one; that 's sure," said the second peasant.

"Well," said Roland, "and if there is, what have the Chartreuse, the pavilion, and the subterranean passage to do with the boar?"

"Why, just this, that it is a bad place for the boar to be in."

"Come now, explain yourselves, you rascals!" cried Roland, who was beginning to get angry, while his mother seemed uneasy and Amélie visibly turned pale.

"Beg pardon, Monsieur Louis, but we are not rascals; we are men who fear God, and that 's the whole of it."

"Heavens and earth!" cried Roland; "I, too, fear God. What of that?"

"We don't want to have dealings with the devil."

"No, no, no!" said the second peasant.

"A man can match a man, if he is his own kind," said the first peasant.

"Sometimes two," said the second, who was shaped like a Hercules.

"But with ghostly beings, phantoms, spectres, — no thank you!" said the first peasant.

"No, thank you!" echoed the second.

"Ah, mother! sister!" cried Roland, addressing the

two women, "in Heaven's name, tell me if you know what these fools are talking about?"

"Fools!" exclaimed the first peasant; "that may be, but it is none the less true that Pierre Marey for even looking over the wall of the Chartreuse had his neck twisted. It is true it was of a Saturday, the devil's sabbath —"

"And they could n't straighten it," said the second peasant; "so they had to bury him with his face turned round and looking behind him."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Sir John, "this is interesting; I like ghost stories."

"You are not like Sister Amélie, then. Look at her!" cried Édouard; "is n't she pale?"

"Yes, indeed," said Sir John. "Mademoiselle must be ill."

"I? Not at all," exclaimed Amélie; "only — Don't you think, mamma, it is very hot here?" and she wiped her forehead, which was moist with perspiration.

"No," replied Madame de Montrevel.

"Still," insisted Amélie, "if it would not annoy you, I should like to open the window."

"Do so, my dear."

Amélie rose hastily to profit by the permission, and went with tottering steps to open a window toward the garden. After it was opened she stood leaning against the sill, half hidden by the curtains.

"Ah!" she murmured, "here at least I can breathe."

Sir John rose to offer her his smelling-salts, but she said hastily: —

"No, no, thank you; I am very much better."

"Well, about the boar, Monsieur Louis; we will fetch it to-morrow."

"That 's it," said the second man, "to-morrow, at daybreak."

"But to-night —"

"Oh! to-night —"

The peasant looked at his comrade, and both declared at the same moment, shaking their heads: —

"To-night it can't be done."

"Cowards!"

"Monsieur Louis, a man is not a coward because he is afraid."

"No, that don't make a coward," said the other man.

"Ha!" cried Roland; "I wish some stronger men than you faced me down with that theory, — that a man is not a coward because he is afraid."

"That 's according to what he is afraid of, Monsieur Louis. Give me a good sickle and a good cudgel and I am not afraid of a wolf; give me a good gun and I am not afraid of a man, even if I knew that that man was waiting to murder me."

"Yes," said Édouard; "but you are afraid of a ghost, even a monk's ghost."

"Little Master Édouard," said the peasant, "do you let your brother talk; you are not old enough to joke about such matters yet."

"No," added the other; "wait till your beard is grown, little gentleman."

"I have n't a beard on my chin," said Édouard, drawing himself up, "but that would n't prevent me, if I were strong enough, from fetching that boar myself, whether it was day or night."

"Much good that would do you, my young gentleman. At any rate, my companion and I, we tell you plainly we would n't go for a louis."

"Would you go for two?" said Roland, determined to sift the matter out.

"Not for two, nor four, nor ten, Monsieur de Montrevel. Ten louis are good; but what should I do with your ten louis if my neck was wrung?"

"Yes, like Pierre Marey," said the other man.

"Ten louis would n't give bread to my wife and children for the rest of their days, would they?"

"And if you had the ten louis," said the second peasant, "they would only be five, for five would be mine."

"Are there ghosts in the pavilion?" asked Roland.

"I don't say there are any in the pavilion, — I 'm not sure about the pavilion; but in the Chartreuse — "

"In the Chartreuse you are sure?"

"Oh, yes; sure!"

"Have you seen them?"

"No; but some persons have."

"Your comrade?" inquired Roland, turning to the second peasant.

"I have not seen ghosts, but I have seen flames; and Claude Philippon has heard chains."

"Ha! ha! flames and chains!" cried Roland.

"Yes, I 've seen flames, too," said the first peasant.

"And Claude Philippon heard the chains," repeated the second.

"Very good, my friends; very good," said Roland, in a jeering tone. "Then you positively will not go to-night at any price?"

"Not at any price."

"Not for all the gold in the world."

"And you will go to-morrow at daybreak?"

"Oh, Monsieur Louis, the boar shall be here long before you are up."

"Well, then," said Roland, "come and see me day after to-morrow."

"Willingly, Monsieur Louis; but what do you want us to do?"

"Never mind, come."

"Oh, we 'll come."

"The moment you say 'Come,' Monsieur Louis, we are sure not to miss."

"Well, I 'll give you then some positive information — "

"What about?"

"Those ghosts."

Amélie gave a stifled cry; Madame de Montrevel alone

heard it. Roland dismissed the peasants with a wave of his hand, and they jostled each other in the doorway, which they tried to go through together.

Nothing more was said that evening of the Chartreuse or the pavilion, nor of the supernatural beings, spectres or phantoms, who haunted them

XV.

A STRONG MIND.

By ten o'clock every one was in bed at the château des Noires-Fontaines, or, at any rate, they had all retired to their rooms.

Two or three times in the course of the evening Amélie had approached Roland, as if she had something to say to him; but the words seemed to die upon her lips. When the family left the salon she took his arm, and though his room was on the floor above hers, she accompanied him to the door of it. There Roland kissed her, bade her good-night, declaring himself very tired, and closed the door.

But in spite of his declaration he did not proceed to undress. He went to his collection of arms, picked out a magnificent pair of pistols, manufactured in Versailles and presented to his father by the Convention, and snapped the triggers and blew in the barrels to see that there were no old charges in them. The pistols were in excellent condition. He then laid them side by side on the table, opened his door softly, looked toward the staircase to see if any one was watching, and finding that the corridor and stairway were both deserted, he went along the passage and knocked at Sir John's door.

"Come in," said the Englishman.

Sir John, like himself, had not prepared for bed.

"I knew by that sign you made me," said Sir John, "that you had something to say to me; so, as you see, I have waited for you."

"Indeed, I have something to say to you," replied Roland, flinging himself gayly into an arm-chair.

"My dear Roland," said the Englishman, "I am beginning to understand you. When I see you as gay as you are now, I feel like your peasants — frightened."

"You heard what they said?"

"I heard them tell a splendid ghost story. I have, myself, a haunted castle in England."

"Have you ever seen a ghost, Sir John?"

"Yes, when I was a small boy. Unluckily, since I have grown up they have all disappeared."

"That 's the way of ghosts," said Roland, gayly; "they come and they go. What a bit of luck, is n't it, that I should have come back just in time to see the ghosts in the Chartreuse of Seillon?"

"Yes," said Sir John; "it is very lucky, — if you are sure there are any."

"No, I am not sure; but I shall be sure the day after to-morrow."

"How so?"

"I intend to pass to-morrow night down there."

"Oh!" said the Englishman; "would you like me to go with you?"

"It would give me great pleasure; but, unfortunately, the thing is impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"Do you know the manners and customs of ghosts, Sir John?" said Roland, gravely.

"No."

"Well, I know them; ghosts only appear under certain conditions."

"Explain."

"Well, for instance, in Italy, the most superstitious country in the world, there are no ghosts, or, if there are any, they are only seen once in ten years, twenty years, a century."

"To what do you attribute their absence?"

"To the absence of fogs."

"Ha! ha!"

"Not a doubt of it. You understand, the native atmosphere of ghosts is fog and mist. Scotland, Denmark, England, regions of fog, are overrun with ghosts. There is the ghost of Hamlet's father, Banquo's ghost, the ghosts of the victims of Richard the Third. In Italy there is but one, Cæsar's ghost, and that never appeared except to Brutus, at Philippi in Macedonia, in Thrace, — that is to say, in the Denmark of Greece, the Scotland of the Orient, where fog made Ovid so melancholy that he named the odes he wrote there 'Tristia.' Why did Virgil make the ghost of Anchises appear to Æneas? Because Virgil came from Mantua. Do you know Mantua? — a marsh, a regular frog-pond, a manufactory of rheumatism, an atmosphere of mists; consequently, a nest of phantoms."

"Go on; I 'm listening."

"Have you ever seen the banks of the Rhine?"

"Yes."

"Germany, that part?"

"Yes."

"A land of fairies, ondines, sylphs, and ghosts (for whoso does the greater see can see the less); well, all that is because of the incessant fog. But in Italy and in Spain, where the devil could the ghosts hide? There is not one scrap of mist. So that if I were in Spain or Italy I should n't attempt the adventure I am going upon to-morrow."

"But all that does not tell me why you refuse my company," said Sir John.

"Wait. I have now explained to you that ghosts never risk themselves in certain countries, because their atmospheric conditions are wanting; let me further explain the precautions we must take if we want to see them."

"Oh, yes; explain, explain!" cried Sir John. "Really, Roland, I would rather hear you talk than any other man I know."

And Sir John stretched himself out in his easy-chair, prepared to listen with delight to the impulsive talk of

that fantastic mind, which he had seen under so many aspects during the few short days they had been together.

Roland bent his head by way of thanks.

"Well, this is how it is," he said, "and you will soon see it. I have heard so much about ghosts in my life that I understand the scamps as if I had made them. Why do ghosts appear?"

"Are you asking me?" inquired Sir John.

"Yes, I 'm asking you."

"I own that not having studied ghosts as you have, I am unprepared with an answer."

"I thought so. Ghosts appear, my dear Sir John, in order to frighten those who see them."

"That is undeniable."

"Yes; but if they don't frighten those to whom they appear, it is those to whom they appear who frighten them, — witness M. de Turenne, whose phantoms proved to be false coiners. Do you know that story?"

"No."

"I 'll tell it to you some other time; don't let us get mixed up. Now that is why, after ghosts decide to appear (which is seldom), they generally choose stormy nights, when it thunders and lightens and blows; that 's their scenery."

"I admit all that to be eminently true."

"Now wait. There are moments when the bravest man feels a shudder through his veins; it has happened to me a dozen times when I have seen the flash of sabres above my head and heard the thunder of the cannon about me. Now ghosts know this; they know that the sense of fear increases or diminishes according to the seeing and hearing of exterior things. For example, where do phantoms prefer to appear? In dark places, cemeteries, old cloisters, ruins, subterranean passages, because the aspect of such localities predisposes the human mind to fear. What precedes their appearance? Usually the rattling of chains, moans, sighs, because there is nothing very cheerful in

all that. They take good care not to appear in a blaze of light or the middle of a country dance. No; fear is an abyss down which you go step by step until a giddiness takes you, until your foot slips, and you fall with closed eyes to the bottom of the precipice. So if you read the accounts of all apparitions you will find that they proceed in this way, — first the heavens darken, the thunder growls, the wind whistles, the doors and windows rattle, the lamp (if there is a lamp in the room of the person whom the ghost means to frighten), the lamp flares up, then gets dim, and goes out — utter darkness! Then in the darkness moans, wails are heard, and the rattling of chains; then, at last, the door opens, the ghost enters! I must say that all the apparitions I have, not seen, but read of presented themselves under just those circumstances. Is n't that so, Sir John?"

"Yes, exactly."

"Did you ever hear of a ghost appearing to two persons at the same time?"

"I never did."

"That 's easily explained. Two persons together have no fear. Fear is a strange, mysterious thing, independent of the will, and needing for its development solitude, darkness, and isolation. A ghost cannot be more dangerous than a cannon-ball. Well, is a soldier afraid of a cannon-ball by daylight, when his elbows touch a comrade to right and left? No; he goes up to the battery. He is killed or he kills. Now ghosts don't want that. This is the reason why they never choose to appear to two persons at once, and it is also why I want to go to the Chartreuse alone, Sir John; your presence would prevent the boldest ghost from appearing. If I don't see anything, or if I see anything worth the trouble of following up, you shall have your turn the next night. Will that satisfy you?"

"Perfectly; but why can't I take the first night?"

"Ah! because the idea did n't come to you first, and it is only just I should have the profits of my own idea.

Besides, I belong to this region; I was friendly with all those good monks in their lifetime, and there may be a chance that they would like to appear to me after death. Moreover, as I know the localities, if it becomes necessary to run away or pursue, I can do either better than you. Don't you see the justice of that?"

"Yes, it is quite fair; but am I sure of going the next night?"

"The next night and the night after and every day and night you like; all I hold to is the first. Now," continued Roland, rising, "this is all between ourselves, is n't it? Not a word to any one; the ghosts might hear of it and act accordingly. It would never do to let those jolly dogs get the best of us, — that would be too grotesque."

"I 'm not afraid of that. You will go armed, of course?"

"If I thought I were really to deal with ghosts, I should go with my hands in my pockets, and nothing in my fobs; but, as I told you just now, I remember M. de Turenne's sort of ghosts, and therefore I shall carry pistols."

"Do you want mine?"

"No, thank you. Yours are good, but I am half resolved never to touch them again. Good-night, Sir John; I mean to sleep soundly so as not to want any sleep to-morrow night."

Then, after shaking the Englishman's hand vigorously he left the room and returned to his own. There he was greatly surprised to see the door, which he was certain he had left shut, open. But as soon as he entered the room the sight of his sister explained the matter to him.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, half-surprised, half-uneasy; "is it you, Amélie?"

"Yes," she said, "it is I." Then approaching her brother and letting him kiss her forehead, she added, in a supplicating tone, "You won't go there, will you, dear Roland?"

"Go where?"

"To the Chartreuse."

"Who told you I was going?"

"Oh! to any one who knows you it is n't hard to guess it."

"Why do you want me not to go to the Chartreuse?"

"I am afraid something may happen to you."

"Ho! do you believe in ghosts, — you?" cried Roland, looking fixedly into his sister's eyes.

Amélie looked away, and Roland felt her hand trembling in his.

"Look here," said Roland; "my sister Amélie, at any rate the one I used to know, the daughter of General de Montrevel, is much too intelligent to give way to vulgar terrors; it is quite impossible that you can believe these stories of apparitions, chains, flames, spectres, phantoms."

"If I did believe them, Roland, I should be much less alarmed. If ghosts exist, they must be souls without their bodies; consequently they cannot bring from the grave their material hatreds. Besides, why should a ghost hate you, Roland, — you, who never did harm to any one?"

"You forget all those I have killed in war or in duels."

Amélie shook her head.

"I am not afraid of them."

"Then what are you afraid of?"

"I don't know, Roland," she said; "but I am afraid."

The young man raised her head, which she was hiding in his breast, with gentle force, and said, kissing her eyelids softly and tenderly: —

"You know that they are not ghosts I mean to fight to-morrow?"

"Brother, don't go to the Chartreuse!" cried the girl, evading his question.

"Mother has told you to say that; confess it, Amélie."

"Oh, brother, no; my mother does not know a word of it. It is I who have guessed where you mean to go."

"Well, if I mean to go, Amélie, you ought to know by this time that I shall go."

"Even if I beseech you on my knees, brother?" said Amélie, in a tone of anguish, slipping down to her brother's feet.

"Oh, women! women!" muttered Roland, "inexplicable creatures, whose words are all mystery, whose lips never tell their real secrets, who weep and pray and tremble — why? God may know, but man does n't. I shall go, Amélie, because I have resolved to go; and when I have once taken a resolution no power on earth can make me change it. Now kiss me, and don't be frightened."

Amélie raised her head, gave her brother a fixed, despairing look, and left the room, sobbing.

XVI.

THE GHOST.

The next evening the young aide-de-camp, after convincing himself that every one in the château des Noires-Fontaines had gone to bed, opened his door softly, went down the staircase holding his breath, reached the vestibule, slid the bolts of the outer door noiselessly, stepped off the portico, and then turned round to make sure that all was still. The darkened windows satisfied him, and he boldly opened the iron gate. The hinges had probably been oiled that day, for they turned without grating and closed again noiselessly on Roland, who now walked rapidly in the direction of the Pont d'Ain at Bourg.

He had hardly gone a hundred yards before the clock at Saint-Just struck once; that of Montagnat answered like a bronze echo. It was half-past ten o'clock. At the pace the young man was walking, he needed only twenty minutes to reach the Chartreuse, especially if, instead of skirting the woods, he took the path which led straight to the monastery. Roland was too familiar from his youth with these bridle-paths to lengthen his walk by ten minutes. He therefore turned and cut across the woods, coming out on the other side in about five minutes. Once there, he had only to cross a bit of open ground to reach the orchard wall of the convent. This took barely another five minutes.

At the foot of the wall he stopped, but only for a few seconds. He unhooked his cloak, rolled it up, and threw it over the wall. The cloak off, he stood in a velvet coat, white leather breeches, and top-boots. The coat was fas-

tened round the waist by a belt in which were a pair of pistols. A broad-brimmed hat covered his head and shaded his face.

With the same rapidity with which he had thrown off a garment that might have hindered his climbing the wall, he now began to scale it. His foot found a chink between the stones, and he sprang up, seized the coping with one hand, and was over on the other side without even resting on the wall, having bounded over it. Once down he picked up his cloak, threw it over his shoulders, hooked it, and crossed the orchard to a little door which communicated with the cloister. The clock struck eleven as he passed through it. Roland stopped, counted the strokes, and slowly walked round the cloister, looking and listening.

He saw nothing and heard no noise. The monastery was a picture of desolation and solitude; the doors were all open, — those of the cells, that of the chapel, that of the refectory. In the refectory, a vast hall where the tables still stood in their places, Roland noticed five or six bats. A frightened owl flew through a broken window and perched on a tree close by, uttering its melancholy cry.

"Good!" said Roland, aloud. "I'll make my headquarters here; bats and owls are the vanguard of ghosts."

The sound of that human voice, lifted in the midst of this darkness, desolation, and solitude, had something so unnatural, so lugubrious about it that it might have made even the speaker shudder if Roland had not been, as he said himself, inaccessible to fear. He looked about him for a place where his eyes could take in the whole hall. An isolated table, placed on a sort of stage at one end of the refectory, which had no doubt been used by the superior of the convent to take his food apart from the monks, or to read from pious books during the meals, seemed to Roland the place he needed. Backed by a wall he could not be surprised from behind, and from that point, as soon

as his eye grew accustomed to the darkness, he could survey every part of the hall. He looked for a seat, and found an overturned stool about three feet from the table, — probably the one used by the reader or the person dining there in solitude.

Roland sat down before the table, unfastened his cloak for greater freedom of movement, took his pistols out of his belt, laid one before him, and striking three blows on the table with the butt-end of the other pistol, he said in a loud voice: —

"The meeting is opened; the ghosts can now appear."

Those who have passed through graveyards and churches in the dark with friends have often felt, without perhaps analyzing it, that supreme necessity to speak low and reverently which attaches to certain localities. Such persons will understand the strange impression produced on any one who heard it by the curt, mocking tones of the voice which now disturbed the solitude and the shadows. It vibrated for an instant in the darkness which seemed to quiver with it; then it slowly died away, without an echo, escaping by all the many openings made by the wings of time.

Roland's eyes became, as he expected, used to the darkness; and now, thanks to the moon, which had just risen and was penetrating the refectory through its broken windows in long white rays, he was able to see distinctly from one end to the other of the vast apartment. Though Roland was as evidently without fear inside as he had been outside of those walls, he was not without distrust; his ears were attentive to every sound.

He heard the half-hour strike. In spite of himself the sound made him quiver, for it came from the clock of the convent. How was it that in this ruin, where all was dead, a clock, that pulse of time, was living?

"Oh! oh!" said Roland; "that tells me that I shall see something."

The words were spoken almost as an aside. The majesty

of the place and of the silence acted upon that heart of iron, firm as the iron tongue which had just tolled the call of time upon eternity. The minutes slowly passed, one after another. Perhaps a cloud was passing between the earth and moon, for Roland thought the shadows deepened. Then he fancied that he heard, as midnight approached, a thousand imperceptible sounds, confused and diverse, coming, no doubt, from that nocturnal universe which wakes while the other sleeps. Nature will not permit suspension of life, even for rest. She has her nocturnal world as well as her daily world, from the gnat which buzzes about the sleeper's pillow, to the lion prowling around the Arab's bivouac.

Roland, the camp watcher, the sentinel in the desert, Roland the huntsman, Roland the soldier, knew all those sounds; they were powerless to disturb him. But suddenly, mingling with them, the tones of the clock again vibrated in the air above his head.

It was midnight. Roland counted the twelve strokes, one after another.

The last hung quivering in the air like a bird with iron wings; then the sound slowly expired, sadly, sorrowfully. Just then the young man thought he heard a moan. He listened in the direction from which it seemed to come. It was evidently coming nearer.

He rose. Both hands rested on the table, and beneath the palm of each was the butt-end of a pistol. A rustle like that of a sheet or a gown trailing on grass was clearly audible on his left, about ten paces from him. He straightened himself erect as though moved by a spring.

At the same moment a Shade appeared on the threshold of the vast hall. This Shade was like the ancient statues lying on the tombs. It was wrapped in a winding-sheet, which trailed behind it.

For an instant Roland doubted his own eyes. Had the absorption of his mind made him see a thing that was not? Was he the dupe of his senses, the sport of hallucinations,

which physicians assert but cannot explain? A moan uttered by the phantom put his doubts to flight.

"Ha! ha!" he cried in a burst of laughter, "now for a tussle, friend ghost!"

The spectre stopped and extended a hand to the young officer.

"Roland, Roland!" it said, in a hollow voice, "it would be a pity not to follow to the grave those you have sent there."

Then, without hastening its step, the spectre continued on its way.

Roland, astounded for a moment, came down from his platform and pursued it. The way was difficult, encumbered with stones, benches standing about, and tables overturned. And yet through all these obstacles a path seemed to open for the spectre, which continued on, unchecked, unhasting.

Each time it passed a window the light from without, feeble as it was, shone on the shroud and outlined the phantom, which passed into obscurity as it left the window, only to reappear again at the next. Roland, his eyes fixed on the figure he pursued, fearing to lose sight of it if he diverted them even for an instant, could not see the way, apparently so easy to the spectre, yet bristling with obstacles for him. He stumbled at every step. The ghost was outstripping him. It reached the door opposite to that by which it had entered. Roland saw the entrance to a dark passage; he felt that the Shade would escape him.

"Man or ghost, robber or monk," he cried, "stop, or I fire!"

"A dead man cannot be killed twice, and death has no power over spirits," said the Shade, in muffled tones.

"Who are you?"

"The Shade of him you violently tore from earth."

Roland burst out laughing in his strident laugh, made more terrible by the darkness around him.

"Upon my word," he said, "if you have no other indica-

tion to give me, I shall not trouble myself to discover you."

"Remember the fountain of Vaucluse," said the Shade, in so faint a voice that the words seemed to issue from his lips like a sigh rather than in articulate words.

For an instant Roland felt, not his heart failing him, but the sweat rolling off his forehead. Making an effort over himself he recovered his strength and said in a threatening voice: —

"For the last time, apparition or reality, I warn you that if you do not stop, I fire."

The Shade did not pause, but continued its way.

Roland paused to take aim. The spectre was ten paces from him. Roland was a sure shot. He himself had loaded his pistols, and only a moment before he had looked to the charge and seen it was right.

As the spectre passed, tall and white, under the gloomy archway of the corridor, Roland fired. The flash illumined the passage like lightning; the spectre was seen passing on, still with unhasting step. Then all was darker than before. The ghost disappeared in the blackness.

Roland rushed down the passage in pursuit, changing the second pistol from his left hand to his right. But short as the pause had been, the spectre had gained ground. Roland saw it at the end of the corridor, this time against the gray background of the night. He increased his speed and reached the end of the passage just as the spectre disappeared through the door of a cistern. Roland redoubled his speed. Reaching the door it seemed to him that the ghost was plunging into the bowels of the earth. But the upper part of his body was still visible.

"Devil or not," cried Roland, "I 'll follow you."

And he fired his second shot, which filled the cavernous space down which the ghost had plunged with flame and smoke.

When the smoke cleared away Roland looked about him. He was alone. He sprang into the cistern, howling

with rage. He sounded the walls with the butt-end of his pistol; he stamped with his feet upon the earth. Walls and earth gave back the sound of solid objects. He strained his eyes to see through the obscurity; but it was impossible. The feeble moonlight which filtered downward stopped at the first steps to the cistern.

"Oh!" cried Roland; "a torch! a torch!"

No one answered. The only sound to be heard was that of the spring bubbling close beside him. He saw that further search would be useless and he left the cavern. Drawing a powder-horn from his pocket, and two balls, he reloaded his pistols. Then he took the path along which he had just come, found the dark passage, then the refectory, and again took his place at the end of the silent hall, and waited.

But the hours of the night sounded successively, until they became the morning hours, and the first gleams of the dawning day cast their pallid tones upon the walls of the cloister.

"Well," muttered Roland, "it is all over for to-night. Perhaps another time I shall have better luck."

Twenty minutes later he re-entered the château de Noires-Fontaines.

XVII.

FURTHER SEARCH.

Two persons were awaiting Roland's return, — one in anguish, the other with impatience. They were Amélie and Sir John. Neither the one nor the other had slept for an instant. Amélie betrayed her anguish only by the sound of her door which was furtively closed when Roland's step was heard on the staircase.

Roland heard the sound. He had not the heart to pass his sister's door without reassuring her.

"You can be easy now, Amélie," he said; "I'm here."

It did not occur to his mind that his sister could be anxious for any one but him.

Amélie darted from her room in her night-dress. It was easy to see, from the pallor of her skin and the dark circles which had spread to the middle of her cheeks, that she had never closed an eye all night.

"Has nothing happened to you, Roland?" she said, pressing her brother in her arms and feeling him over anxiously.

"Nothing."

"Neither to you nor to any one?"

"Neither to me nor to any one."

"And you saw nothing?"

"I did n't say that."

"Good God! what did you see?"

"I'll tell you all about it later; meantime, there is no one either killed or wounded."

"Ah! I breathe again."

"Now, if I may give you a bit of advice, little sister, go to bed and sleep, if you can, till breakfast time. That's

what I shall do; and I 'll warrant you it won't take much rocking to put me to sleep. Good-night, or rather, good-morning."

Roland kissed his sister tenderly; then affecting to whistle a hunting air carelessly, he ran up the stairs to the second story. Sir John was frankly waiting for him in the corridor. He went straight to the young man.

"Well?" he said.

"Well, I have n't exactly rolled my stone for nothing."

"Did you see a ghost?"

"I saw something that resembled one."

"You are going to tell me all about it at once?"

"Yes, I understand; you won't sleep at all or you will sleep ill if I don't tell you. Here it is, in a dozen words, just as it all happened."

And Roland gave an exact and circumstantial account of his night's adventure.

"Good!" said Sir John, when Roland had finished; "you have left something for me to do at any rate."

"I am even afraid," said Roland, "that I have left you the hardest part."

Then, as Sir John asked many questions about the relative positions of the localities, he said: —

"To-day, after breakfast, we will pay a visit to the Chartreuse in broad daylight, which will help you to study the localities. Only, you must tell no one."

"Oh!" cried Sir John, "do I look like a gabbler?"

"No, that 's true," said Roland; "you are not a gabbler, but I 'm a ninny." So saying, he retired to his bedroom.

After breakfast the two men sauntered down the slopes of the garden as if to take a walk along the banks of the Reyssouse; then they bore to the left, came up the hill for about forty paces, struck into the high-road, then through the woods, till they reached the orchard-wall at the very place where Roland had scaled it the night before.

"Sir John," said Roland, pointing to the wall, "here is the way."

"Then let us take it," replied Sir John.

Slowly, with a wonderful strength of wrist, which proved him to be a man who was thoroughly trained in gymnastics, the Englishman laid hold of the coping, swung himself to the top of the wall, and dropped on the other side. Roland followed, with the rapidity of a man who is not doing a feat for the first time. They were both on the other side, within the convent's precincts. The desertion and desolation were more visible by day than by night. The grass was growing in the paths as high as a man's knee; the espaliers were tangled with vines, now so thick that the grapes could not ripen in the shade of the leaves; in many places the wall was giving way, and ivy, the parasite rather than the friend of ruins, was spreading everywhere.

As for the trees in the open space, plums, peaches, apricots, they had grown with the freedom of oaks and beeches in a forest, and their sap, entirely absorbed in the branches, which were many and vigorous, produced hardly any fruit, and what there was, was imperfect.

Roland led his friend straight to the door between the cloister and the orchard; but before entering the cloister, he turned to look at the face of the convent clock. That clock, which to his knowledge was going the night before, was now stopped. From the cloister they entered the refectory. There, the daylight showed under their true aspect the various objects which the darkness had clothed with fantastic forms the night before. Roland pointed out to Sir John the overturned seats, the table marked by the hammer of the pistol, the door by which the ghost had entered. He followed, accompanied by the Englishman, the way he had taken in pursuit of the phantom; he saw what the obstacles were over which he had stumbled, and noticed how easily they could be crossed or avoided by any one used to the locality.

When they reached the spot where he had fired, he found the wad, but it was quite impossible for him to find the bullet. The arrangement of the corridor, which turned in a slanting direction, made it impossible for the bullet, if its marks were not on the wall, to have missed the ghost, and yet if the ghost were hit, supposing it to be a solid body, how came it to remain upright? Was it wounded or unwounded? And if wounded, where was the blood? There was no trace of either blood or ball.

Sir John was almost brought to admit that his friend had had to do with a veritable ghost.

"Some one may have come here after me and picked up the ball," remarked Roland.

"But if you fired at a man why did n't the ball go into him?"

"Oh! that 's explainable enough; the man wore a coat of mail under his shroud."

This was possible; but Sir John shook his head doubtfully; he seemed to prefer believing in a supernatural event, — it gave him less trouble.

Roland and he continued their investigations, which brought them to the end of the corridor which opened on the farthest extremity of the orchard. It was there that Roland had seen his spectre for an instant, as it disappeared in the dark vault. He now went straight to the cistern. There he understood how the darkness of the night had seemed to deepen; all reflection from without was absent; even by daylight it was impossible to see distinctly.

Roland drew from beneath his cloak two torches about a foot long, took a flint, lighted the tinder, and a match from the tinder. Both torches flared up. He gave one to the Englishman.

The problem now was to discover the way by which the ghost had disappeared. Roland and Sir John lowered their torches to the bottom of the cistern, which was paved with large squares of limestone apparently well joined

together. Roland looked for his second ball as persistently as he had hunted for the first. A loose stone lay under his feet; he pushed it aside and saw an iron ring fastened into one of the limestone blocks. Without a word Roland slipped his hand through the ring, braced himself on his feet, and pulled. The block turned on its pivot with an ease which proved that it was often subjected to the same manipulation. As it turned, it disclosed the entrance to a subterranean passage.

"Ah!" cried Roland, "this is the way my spectre went."

And down he went into the yawning passage. Sir John followed him. They took the same way that Morgan had taken when he returned to give account of his expedition. At the end of the passage they came upon the iron gate which opened into the burial vaults. Roland shook it; it was not locked, and it opened. They then crossed the vault and came to the second iron gate; like the first it was open. Roland was first; they went up several steps and found themselves in the choir of the chapel, where the scene we have related between Morgan and The Company of Jehu took place; only, the stalls were now empty, the choir deserted, and the altar, degraded by the abandonment of worship, was no longer covered by the sacred cloth or the burning tapers.

It was evident to Roland that this was the goal of the false ghost, which Sir John was inclined to think a real one. But real or false, Sir John admitted that its flight had brought it to this particular spot. He reflected an instant and then remarked: —

"As it is my turn to watch to-night, I have the right to choose my ground; I shall watch here."

And he pointed to a sort of table, formed in the centre of the choir by an oaken pedestal which formerly supported the eagle lectern.

"Yes," said Roland, with the same heedlessness he showed in his own affairs, "you'll do very well there;

only, as you may find the gates locked and the stone fastened to-night, we had better look for some other way to get here."

In less then five minutes an outlet was found. The door of an old sacristy opened into the choir, and from the sacristy a broken window gave passage into the forest.

"Here 's what we want," said Roland; "but as you cannot possibly find your way at night in a forest you could scarcely cross by day, I shall come with you here."

"Yes; but the moment I get in you are to leave me," said the Englishman. "I remember what you said about the susceptibility of ghosts; if they know you are near by they may hesitate to appear; and as you have seen one, I insist on seeing at least one myself."

"I 'll leave you,— don't be afraid," said Roland. "Only," he added, "I do fear one thing."

"What is that?"

"That in your double capacity as Englishman and heretic they won't feel at ease with you."

"Ah!" returned Sir John, gravely, "what a pity I have n't time to abjure!"

The two friends had seen all there was to see, and they now returned to the château. No one, except Amélie, had suspected that their walk was other than an ordinary one. The day passed without questions and without apparent anxiety; besides, it was already late when the gentlemen came home. At dinner, to Édouard's great joy, another hunt was proposed; and it made the subject of conversation for the rest of the evening. By ten o'clock, as usual, all had retired to their rooms, except Roland who was in that of Sir John.

The difference of characters showed itself markedly in the preparations of the two men. Roland had made them joyously, as for a pleasure trip; Sir John made his gravely, as though for a duel. He loaded his pistols with the greatest care and put them into his belt, and instead of a cloak which might have impeded his motions, he

wore an English top-coat with a high collar, put on over his other coat.

At half-past ten the pair left the house with the same precautions which Roland had taken when he went alone. It was five minutes before eleven when they reached the broken window of the sacristy. There, according to agreement, they were to part. Sir John reminded the young man of his promise.

"Yes," said Roland, "an agreement is an agreement with me, once for all. Only, I have a piece of advice to give you."

"What is it?"

"I could not find my bullets because some one has been here and carried them off; and that person carried them off to prevent me from seeing the dents that are no doubt on them."

"What sort of dents do you mean?"

"Those of the links of a coat of mail; my ghost was a man in armor."

"I am sorry for that," said Sir John; "I hoped for a ghost."

After a moment's silence and a sigh expressive of his deep regret at resigning a ghost, the Englishman said: —

"What was your advice?"

"Fire at his face."

Sir John nodded, shook hands with the young officer, clambered through the window and disappeared in the sacristy.

"Good-night!" called Roland after him.

Then, with that indifference to danger which a soldier usually feels for himself and his companions, Roland did as he had promised, and took the way back to the château des Noires-Fontaines.

XVIII.

THE TRIAL.

The next day Roland, who had stayed awake till two in the morning, awoke about seven. He recalled his scattered senses, and remembering what had passed he felt astonished that Sir John had not come into his room when he returned, and roused him. He dressed quickly and went to Sir John's room, at the risk of waking him out of his morning nap.

He knocked at the door. No answer. He knocked again. Same silence. This time some uneasiness mingled with Roland's curiosity. The key was in the lock. The young man opened the door and cast a rapid look around the room. Sir John was not there; he had not returned. The bed was undisturbed. What had happened?

There was not an instant to lose; and we may be sure that Roland, with that rapidity of resolution which we already know in him, did not lose an instant. He sprang into his room, finished dressing, put his hunting-knife into his belt, slung his rifle over his shoulders, and went out. No one was yet awake except the chambermaid. Roland met her on the staircase.

"Tell Madame de Montrevel," he said, "that I have gone into the forest with my gun; and she is not to be uneasy if neither I nor Sir John get back in time for breakfast."

Then he darted away rapidly. In ten minutes he was at the window of the sacristy where he had parted from Sir John the night before. He listened; no sound came from within; the huntsman's ear could detect the morning woodland sounds, but no other. Roland climbed into the

window with his usual agility, and rushed through the sacristy into the choir.

One look sufficed to show him that not only the choir but the whole space of the chapel was empty. Had the spectres led the Englishman along the reverse of the way he had come himself? Possibly. Roland passed rapidly behind the altar, and reached the gate of the vaults; it was open. He entered the subterranean cemetery; darkness hid its depths. He called Sir John by name three times. No answer.

He reached the second gate; it was open like the first. He entered the passage; there he took his hunting-knife in his hand. Feeling his way he went farther and farther, meeting no one; but the farther he went the deeper the darkness, which surely indicated that the stone in the cistern was closed.

He reached the steps; mounted them until his head came in contact with the stone; then he made an effort, — the block turned. He saw daylight and leaped into the cistern. The door which opened into the orchard was open. Roland went through it, crossed that portion of the orchard which lay between the cistern and the corridor at the other end of which he had fired at his phantom. He passed along the corridor and entered the refectory. The refectory was empty.

Again Roland called three times. The astonished echo, which seemed to have forgotten the tones of the human voice, answered stammering. Sir John could not have come that way; it was necessary to go back. Roland did so, and again found himself in the choir of the chapel. That was where Sir John had determined to watch, and there some trace of him must be found.

Roland advanced only a short distance, and then a cry escaped him. A large spot of blood was at his feet, staining the pavement. On the other side of the choir, a dozen feet from the blood that lay at his feet, was another stain not less large, nor less red, nor less recent; it seemed to make a pendant to the first.

One of these stains was to right, the other to left of the oaken pedestal formerly used, as we have said, to support the lectern, — the pedestal Sir John had selected as his place of waiting. Roland went to it; it was drenched with blood. This, then, was the spot where the drama had taken place; a drama which, if all signs were true, must have been terrible.

Roland, in his double capacity of soldier and huntsman, was keen at a quest. He could calculate the amount of blood lost by a man who was killed outright, and that lost by one who was only wounded. That night three men had fallen, dead or wounded. What were the probabilities?

The two stains on the floor, to left and right of the pedestal, were probably the blood of two of Sir John's assailants. The blood on the pedestal was probably his. Attacked on both sides, right and left, he must have fired with both hands, and killed or wounded a man with each shot. Hence the blood which reddened the pavement. He himself must have been struck beside the pedestal, on which his blood had spurted.

After a few seconds of examination, Roland was as sure of all this as though he had seen the struggle with his own eyes. Now, what had been done with the bodies? About two of them Roland cared little enough; but he must know what had become of that of Sir John.

A track of blood started from the pedestal and led to the entrance. Evidently Sir John's body had been carried out. Roland shook the massive door. It was only latched and it yielded to his first pressure. Outside the sill the tracks of blood continued. Roland could see, through the underbrush, a path by which a body had been carried. The broken branches, the trampled herbage led Roland to the edge of the wood on the road leading from Pont d'Ain to Bourg. There the body, living or dead, seemed to have been deposited on the bank of the roadside ditch. Beyond that, no traces whatever.

A man passed, coming from the direction of the Noires-Fontaines; Roland went up to him.

"Have you seen anything on the road? Did you meet any one?" he inquired.

"Yes," said the man, "I saw two peasants carrying a body on a litter."

"Ah!" cried Roland, "was it that of a living man?"

"The man was pale and did not move; he looked as if he were dead."

"Was the blood flowing?"

"I saw some on the road."

"In that case, he is living."

Then taking a louis from his pocket, he said, —

"There's a louis for you; go as fast as you can to Doctor Milliet at Bourg; tell him to get a horse and come at full speed to the château des Noires-Fontaines. You can add that there is a man there in danger of dying."

While the peasant, stimulated by the reward, made all haste to Bourg, Roland, leaping along on his vigorous legs, was nearing the château.

And now, as our readers are, in all probability, as anxious as Roland to know what had become of Sir John, we shall give an account of the events of the night.

Sir John Tanlay entered, as we have seen, a few minutes before eleven the pavilion of the Chartreuse, commonly called La Correrie, which was nothing more than a chapel erected in the woods. From the sacristy he went into the choir. The choir was empty and seemed solitary. A rather brilliant moon, which disappeared at times under a cloud, sent its bluish rays through the cracked and broken colored glass of the pointed windows. Sir John walked to the middle of the choir, stopped before the pedestal, and remained standing. The minutes rolled away; but this time it was not the convent clock which marked the time, it was the church at Péronnaz, that is to say, the nearest village to the chapel where Sir John was watching.

Everything happened up to midnight as it had to Roland; Sir John heard only the vague murmurings of the breeze, and passing noises.

Midnight struck: it was the moment he awaited with impatience, for it was that at which something would happen, if anything did happen. As the last stroke sounded he fancied he heard footsteps underground and saw a light appearing through the gate which led to the cemetery vaults. His whole attention was fixed on that spot.

A monk issued from the passage, his hood lowered over his eyes, and bearing in his hand a torch. He wore the dress of a chartreux. A second monk followed him, then a third, and so on; Sir John counted twelve. They separated before the altar. There were twelve stalls in the chapel; six on the right of Sir John, six on his left. The twelve monks silently took their places in the twelve stalls. Each planted his torch in a hole made for the purpose in the oaken desk, and waited.

A thirteenth monk appeared and took his stand before the altar.

None of these monks assumed the fantastic behavior of ghosts or phantoms; they all belonged undoubtedly to earth, and were living men.

Sir John, standing erect, a pistol in each hand, his back against the pedestal, watched with the utmost coolness this manœuvre, which tended to surround him. The monks were standing, like himself, erect and silent.

The monk at the altar broke silence.

"Brothers," he asked, "why are the Avengers summoned?"

"To judge a spy."

"What crime has he committed?"

"He has tried to discover the secrets of The Company of Jehu."

"What penalty has he incurred?"

"Death."

The monk at the altar waited, apparently to give time for the sentence to reach the heart of him whom it concerned. Then, turning to the Englishman, who continued as calm as if he were at a comedy, he said: —

"Sir John Tanlay, you are a foreigner, you are an Englishman, — a double reason why you should leave The Company of Jehu to fight its battle with the government it has sworn to destroy. You have failed in wisdom; you have yielded to idle curiosity; instead of keeping out of danger you have entered the lion's den, and the lion rends you."

Then, after a moment's silence, during which he seemed to expect an answer from the Englishman, but received none, he added: —

"Sir John Tanlay, you are condemned to death; prepare to die."

"Ah, ha! I see that I have fallen among thieves. If so, I can buy myself off by a ransom." Then turning to the monk at the altar, he said, "What will you take, captain?"

A threatening murmur greeted these insolent words. The monk at the altar stretched forth his hand: —

"You are mistaken, Sir John; we are not a band of thieves," he said in a tone as composed and calm as that of the Englishman; "and the proof is that if you have money and jewels upon you, you need only give me your instructions and they will be remitted either to the person you may designate or to your family."

"And what guarantee shall I have that my wishes will be obeyed?"

"My word."

"The word of a leader of assassins! I do not believe it."

"You are mistaken, Sir John, as you were before. I am no more the leader of assassins than I am a captain of thieves."

"Who are you then?"

"The elect of celestial vengeance; I am the envoy of Jehu, king of Israel, who was anointed by the prophet Elisha to destroy the house of Ahab."

"If you are what you say you are, why do you veil your face? Why do you wear armor beneath your clothes?

The elect strike openly; they risk death in giving death. Lay off your hoods, show me your naked breasts, and I will admit that you are what you pretend to be."

"Brothers, you have heard him," said the monk at the altar.

Then, stripping off his gown he opened his coat, his waistcoat, and even his shirt. Each monk did the same and stood with his face exposed and his breast bare. They were all fine, handsome young men, the eldest not more, apparently, than thirty-five years old. Their dress was elegant; one thing was noticeable, however, — none were armed. They were there to judge, and for no other purpose.

"Be satisfied, Sir John Tanlay," said the monk at the altar, "you will die; but in dying, you can as you wished, recognize and kill your judges. You have five minutes in which to prepare your soul for death."

Instead of profiting by this permission to think of his eternal salvation, Sir John tranquilly examined his pistols, cocked and uncocked them to be sure of the triggers, and passed a ramrod down each barrel to be certain the balls were there. Then, without waiting for the five minutes to expire, he called out: —

"Gentlemen, I am ready; are you?"

The young men looked at each other; on a sign from their chief they walked straight to Sir John and surrounded him on all sides. The monk at the altar remained motionless in his place, commanding the scene that was about to take place by his eye.

Sir John had but two pistols, consequently he could kill but two men. He took aim and fired. Two of The Company of Jehu fell on the pavement, which they reddened with their blood. The others advanced as if nothing had happened, extending their hands upon Sir John.

Sir John had taken his pistols by the muzzle and was using them like clubs. He was vigorous; the struggle was long. For ten minutes a confused group tussled in the

centre of the choir; then this violent commotion ceased, the Companions of Jehu drew apart to right and left and regained their stalls, leaving Sir John bound with their girdles and lying on the pedestal of the lectern.

"Have you commended your soul to God?" asked the monk at the altar.

"Yes, villain!" cried Sir John, "you may strike."

The monk took a dagger from the altar, advanced with lifted arm, and standing over Sir John, held the dagger above his breast.

"Sir John Tanlay," he said, "you are a brave man; you will doubtless keep faith. Swear that not a word of what you have seen shall ever pass your lips; swear that under no circumstances, whatsoever they may be, you will recognize any of us, and we will grant you your life."

"As soon as I am out of here," said Sir John, "I shall denounce you; the moment I am free I will hound you down.

"Swear!" repeated the monk.

"No!" said Sir John.

"Swear!" said the monk for the third time.

"Never!" said Sir John.

"Then die, since you will it!"

And he drove the dagger to the hilt into the Englishman's breast, who, whether by force of will or because the blow killed him instantly, uttered no sound. Then the monk in a loud, sonorous voice, the voice of a man who was conscious of having done his duty, called out:—

"Justice is done!"

And he returned to the altar, leaving the dagger in the wound.

"Brothers," he said, "I give notice that you are invited to the ball of the Victims, which takes place in Paris at No. 60 rue du Bac on the 21st of January next, in memory of the death of King Louis XVI."

So saying he re-entered the subterranean passage, followed by the remaining ten monks bearing their torches.

An instant later four serving-brothers entered. First, they raised the bodies of the two monks and took them into the sepulchre; then they returned, lifted that of Sir John, laid it on a stretcher, and took it out of the chapel by the entrance door, which they closed after them. Two of the four monks marched in front of the stretcher, bearing the torches left behind by the Jehu brethren.

And now, if our readers ask why there was so much difference between the treatment received by Roland and that administered to Sir John, why such mercy to one, such severity to the other, we reply: —

Remember that Morgan had enjoined on his brethren the safety of Roland, and that Roland, thus protected, could not under any circumstances die by the hand of a Companion of Jehu.

XIX.

THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE RUE DE LA VICTOIRE.

While they are bearing the body of Sir John Tanlay to the château des Noires-Fontaines; while Roland is rushing in the same direction; while the peasant is hurrying to Bourg to notify Dr. Milliet of the catastrophe which demanded his immediate presence, let us jump the distance between Bourg and Paris, and the time which elapsed between the 16th of October and the 7th of November, — that is to say, between the 24th Vendémiaire and the 16th Brumaire, — and enter, about four in the afternoon, the little house in the rue de la Victoire, made historically famous by the conspiracy of the 18th Brumaire, which issued from it fully armed and equipped.

It is the same house which stands there to-day, on the right of the street and numbered 60, apparently astonished to present to the eye of the curious passer, after so many changes of government, the consular fasces which may still be seen on each panel of its double oaken door. Let us follow the long and narrow alley of lindens which leads from the gate on the street to the door of the house; there let us enter the antechamber, take the passage to the left and ascend the twenty stairs which lead to a study hung with green paper, and furnished with curtains, chairs, and sofas of the same color. The walls are covered with maps and plans of cities. Bookcases of maple are on either side of the fireplace, which they enclose; the chairs and sofas, the tables and desks are heaped with books; there is scarcely room on the seats to sit down, or to write at the desks and tables.

In the midst of this encumbering mass of letters, reports, pamphlets, and books, a man had cleared for himself a space, where he was now seated, clutching his hair impatiently, as he endeavored to decipher a page of notes beside which the hieroglyphics on the obelisk of Luxor would have seemed as plain as the Roman alphabet. At the moment when the secretary's impatience was approaching desperation the door opened, and a young officer in the dress of an aide-de-camp entered the room.

The secretary raised his head and a lively expression of satisfaction crossed his face.

"Oh, my dear Roland," he said, "here you are, at last! I am delighted to see you, for three reasons: first, because I was wearying for you; second, because the general is very impatient for your return, and keeps up a hullaballoo about it; and third, because you can help me to decipher this word, over which I 've been groaning for the last ten minutes — but first, and above all, kiss me." And the secretary and the aide-de-camp kissed each other.

"Now, then, let me see the word that defies you, my dear Bourrienne," said Roland.

"Ah, my dear fellow, what a handwriting! I get a white hair for every page I copy; this is the third to-day. There, read it if you can."

Roland took the sheet from the secretary and fixing his eyes on the place shown to him, he began to read quite fluently: —

"'Section XI. The Nile, from Assouan to a distance of twelve miles north of Cairo, flows in a single stream' — Well," said Roland, interrupting himself, "all that 's plain sailing. What do you mean? The general took pains when he wrote that."

"Go on, go on?" said Bourrienne.

"'From that point which is called — called' — Ah, ha!"

"Now you 've got it!"

Roland repeated, "'which is called' — the devil! — 'called' —"

"Yes," said Bourrienne, "called what?"

"What will you give me, Bourrienne," cried Roland, "if I guess it right?"

"I'll give you the first colonel's commission I find signed in blank."

"Faith, no, I won't have it; I don't wish to leave the general; it is better to have a good father than five hundred unruly sons. I'll give you your three words for nothing."

"Three! are there three?"

"They don't look as if there were quite two, I admit that. Now listen and make obeisance to me. 'From the point called Ventre della Vacca' —"

"Ha! Ventre de la Vache! Confound it! he's illegible enough in French, but if he takes it into his head to write Italian, and the Corsican patois to boot, I shall go crazy or run the risk of becoming stupid. Well, you've got it!" and he read the sentence through consecutively: "'The Nile, from Assouan to a distance of twelve miles north of Cairo, flows in a single stream; from that point, which is called Ventre de la Vache, it forms the branches of the Rosetta and the Damietta.' Thank you, Roland;" and he began to write the end of the paragraph, the beginning of which was already committed to paper.

"Tell me," said Roland, "is he still after his hobby, the dear general, colonizing Egypt?"

"Yes, yes; and then, as a sort of make-weight, governing France. Oh, yes, we shall colonize Egypt, — from a distance."

"My dear Bourrienne, do tell me the state of things in this country, or I shall seem like a savage arriving from Timbuctoo."

"In the first place tell me, — did you come back of your own accord, or have you been recalled?"

"Recalled? I should think so!"

"By whom?"

"The general himself."

"Special despatch?"

"Written by himself; see!"

The young man pulled from his pocket a paper containing two lines, not signed, in the same handwriting as that over which Bourrienne had been puzzling. The two lines said: —

"Start. Be in Paris 16th Brumaire. I want you."

"Yes," said Bourrienne; "I think it will be on the 18th."

"What will be on the 18th?"

"Upon my word, Roland, you ask more than I know. He is not, as you are aware, communicative. What will take place on the 18th Brumaire? I don't know as yet, but I am certain it will be something."

"Oh, you must have some idea!"

"I think he means to make himself Director in place of Sieyès; possibly president instead of Gohier."

"Good! How about the Constitution of the year III.?"

"The Constitution of the year III., — what of that?"

"Why, it says a man must be forty years old to be a Director; and the general lacks just ten of them."

"So much the worse for the Constitution, damn it! They must violate it, that 's all."

"It is too young, Bourrienne; you would n't violate a child of seven."

"My dear fellow, in Barras's hands everything grows old fast. The little girl of seven is already an old prostitute."

Roland shook his head.

"What now?" said Bourrienne.

"Well, I don't think our general will make himself a mere Director with four colleagues. Just imagine it, — five kings of France! It would n't be a Directory any longer, but a four-in-hand."

"At any rate, that is all he has allowed any one to perceive so far; but you know, my dear friend, that if we want to find out the general's secrets we must guess them."

"Faith, yes; and I 'm too lazy to take the pains," said Roland, laughing. "Besides, I 'm a regular Janissary, — what will be, will be. Why the devil should I trouble myself to have an opinion, or to battle for it?" The young man enforced his remarks with a long yawn, and then he added, "Where 's the general?"

"With Madame Bonaparte; he came down a quarter of an hour ago. Have you let him know you are here?"

"No; I wanted to see you first. But wait; I hear his step now."

At the same instant the door was opened abruptly, and the same historical personage whom we saw playing a silent part incognito at Avignon entered the room, wearing the picturesque costume of the general-in-chief of the Army of Egypt, except that, being in his own house, he was bareheaded. Roland thought his eyes were more hollow and his skin more leaden than usual. But the moment that he noticed the young man the gloomy, or rather the meditative eye of General Bonaparte emitted a flash of joy.

"Ah! here you are, Roland," he said; "faithful as steel. Called, you come. Welcome."

He held out his hand to the young man. Then, with an almost imperceptible smile, he added: —

"What were you doing with Bourrienne?"

"Waiting for you, general."

"And while waiting you were gossiping like two old women."

"I 'll admit it, general. I showed him my order to be here on the 16th Brumaire."

"Did I say the 16th or the 17th?"

"Oh, the 16th, general; the 17th would have been too late."

"Why too late?"

"Because, hang it! Bourrienne says great things are to happen on the 18th."

"There!" muttered Bourrienne; "that scatter-brain will earn me a wigging."

"Ha! did he tell you I had a project for the 18th?"

Going up to Bourrienne, he took him by the ear.

"Tell-tale!" he said. Then, turning to Roland, he added: "Well, yes, my dear boy; we have great plans for the 18th. My wife and I dine with the president Gohier, an excellent man, who was very polite to Josephine in my absence. You are to go with us, Roland."

Roland looked at Bonaparte.

"Was it for that you recalled me, general?" he said, laughing.

"For that, yes; and perhaps for something else. Bourrienne, write —"

Bourrienne hastily seized his pen.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, general."

My dear President, — I write to let you know that my wife and I and one of my aides-de-camp will dine with you the day after to-morrow, the 18th. This is merely to say that we shall be quite satisfied with a family dinner.

"What next?" said Bourrienne.

"How do you mean, next?"

"Ought n't I to put 'Liberty, equality, fraternity —'?"

"'Or death!'" added Roland.

"No," said Bonaparte; "give me the pen."

He took the pen from Bourrienne's hand, and wrote "Ever yours, Bonaparte." Then pushing away the paper he added, "There, direct it, Bourrienne, and send an orderly with it at once."

Bourrienne wrote the address, sealed the note, and rang the bell. An officer on duty entered.

"Send an orderly with that," said Bourrienne.

"He is to wait for an answer," added Bonaparte.

The officer closed the door.

"Bourrienne," said the general, pointing to Roland, "look at your friend."

"Well, general, so I do."

"Do you know what he did in Avignon?"

"I hope he did n't make a pope."

"No; he flung a plate at a man's head."

"Oh, that was lively!"

"But that 's not all."

"I presume not."

"He fought a duel with that man."

"And he killed him, of course," said Bourrienne.

"Of course; but do you know why?"

"No."

The general shrugged his shoulders and said: —

"Because the man said I was a thief." He looked at Roland with an indefinable expression of mischief and affection. "Ninny!" he said. Then, after a moment, as if recollecting something, he added, "By the bye, that Englishman?"

"Ah! exactly, general; I was just going to speak of him."

"Is he still in France?"

"Yes, and I did think for a time that he was going to stay here till the last trump sounded the reveille in the valley of Jehosaphat."

"Did you miss killing him?"

"Oh, no; it was n't I. We are the best friends in the world. And, general, he is such an excellent man, and so original to boot, that I am going to ask you for a little bit of a favor for him."

"The devil! for an Englishman?" Bonaparte shook his head. "I don't like the English," he said.

"Not as a nation, I grant you; but as individuals —"

"Well, what of him, your friend?"

"He has been tried, condemned, and executed."

"What the devil are you telling me?"

"God's truth, general."

"Do you mean to say he has been tried, condemned, and guillotined?"

"Oh, not exactly: tried and condemned, yes; guillo-

tined, no. If he had been guillotined he would be more dangerously ill than he is now."

"Now explain what you are gabbling about. What court condemned and executed him?"

"That of The Company of Jehu."

"Who are The Company of Jehu?"

"Have you already forgotten our friend Morgan, — the masked man, who brought back the two hundred louis at the table d'hôte at Avignon?"

"No," exclaimed Bonaparte, "I have n't forgotten it. Bourrienne, I told you, did n't I, about that fellow's daring?"

"Yes, general," said Bourrienne; "and I replied that if I had been in your place I should have tried to find out who he was."

"And the general would have found out if he had let me do as I wanted. I was just going to spring at his throat and tear his mask off, when the general said, in that tone you know, 'Sit down, Roland.'"

"Come, get back to your Englishman, chatterer!" exclaimed the general. "Did this Morgan murder him?"

"He did not; but his companions did."

"You spoke just now of a court that tried him."

"General, you are the same as ever," said Roland, with a remnant of their old school familiarity; "you want to know a thing and you don't give time to have it told to you."

"Get elected to the Five Hundred, and you can talk as much as you like."

"Pooh! then I should have four hundred and ninety-nine colleagues who would all want to talk too, and would take the words out of my mouth. I would rather be interrupted by you than by a lawyer."

"Go on."

"Very good. Now, imagine, general, there 's a Chartreuse close to Bourg —"

"I know that, — the Chartreuse de Seillon."

"What! do you know the Chartreuse de Seillon?" cried Roland.

"The general knows everything!" said Bourrienne.

"Well, about the Chartreuse," said Bonaparte. "Are there any monks there now?"

"No; only ghosts —"

"Is it a ghost-story you are going to tell me?"

"Yes, and a famous one."

"The devil! Bourrienne knows I love them. Go on."

"Well, we were told there were ghosts in the convent. You can easily believe that we wanted to clear our minds, Sir John and I, — or rather, I and Sir John. So we each took a night to spend there."

"Spend where?"

"Why, the convent, of course."

Bonaparte made an almost imperceptible sign of the cross with his thumb, — a Corsican habit, which he never lost.

"Ha, ha!" he cried; "and so you saw ghosts?"

"I saw one."

"What did you do to it?"

"Fired at it."

"And then?"

"It walked away."

"And you allowed yourself to be baffled?"

"Ha! that shows how well you know me! I followed it and fired again; but as it knew the way through the ruins better than I did, it got away from me."

"The devil it did!"

"The next day it was Sir John's turn, — I mean our Englishman."

"Did he see the ghost?"

"He saw something better. He saw twelve monks, who entered the church, arraigned him for trying to discover their secrets, condemned him to death, and then, on my word of honor, stabbed him!"

"Did he defend himself?"

"Like a lion, and killed two."

"Is he dead?"

"Almost; but I hope he 'll get over it. Just fancy, general, some peasants found him by the roadside and took him back to my mother, with a dagger planted in his breast like a prop in a vineyard."

"Why, it is like a scene of the Sainte-Vehme, neither more nor less."

"On the handle of the dagger was engraved, so that there might be no mistake as to who did the deed, the words, 'Company of Jehu.'"

"It is n't possible that such things can happen in France in the last year of the eighteenth century! It might do for Germany in the Middle Ages, in the days of the Henrys and Othos —"

"Not possible, do you say? Well, here 's the dagger; what do you say to that? Pretty, is n't it?"

And the young man pulled from under his coat a dagger made entirely of steel, blade and handle.

The handle was shaped like a cross, and on the blade, sure enough, were engraved the words, "Company of Jehu."

Bonaparte examined the weapon carefully.

"And you say they planted that plaything in the breast of your Englishman?"

"To the hilt."

"And he is n't dead?"

"Not yet, at any rate."

"Do you hear that, Bourrienne?"

"With immense interest."

"You must remind me of it, Roland."

"When, general?"

"When? — when I am master. Come and say good-evening to Josephine. Come, Bourrienne, and dine with us; and be careful what you say, both of you, for Moreau is coming to dinner. I shall keep that dagger as a curiosity."

He left the room, followed by Roland, who was soon after followed by Bourrienne. On the staircase they met the orderly who had taken the note to Gohier.

"Well?" said the general.

"Here is the president's answer."

Bonaparte broke the seal and read: —

The president Gohier is enchanted at the prospect held out to him by General Bonaparte. He will expect him to dinner the day after to-morrow, the 18th Brumaire, with his charming wife and his aide-de-camp, whoever he may be. Dinner will be served at five o'clock.

If that hour does not suit General Bonaparte will he kindly make known the one he would prefer.

The president,

GOHIER.

16th Brumaire, year VII.

With an indescribable smile Bonaparte put the letter into his pocket. Then, turning to Roland, he said: —

"Do you know president Gohier?"

"No, general."

"Ah! you will know him; he is an excellent man."

These words were said in a tone that was no less indescribable than the smile.

XX.

THE GUESTS OF GENERAL BONAPARTE.

Josephine, in spite of her thirty-four years, possibly because of them (for that period of life when she hovers between her passing youth and her coming age is delightful in a woman), — Josephine, more graceful than ever, was still the charming being whom we have all known. An imprudent remark of Junot had, at the very moment of her husband's return, caused a coolness between them. But three days had sufficed to restore to the enchantress her full power over the conqueror of Rivoli and the Pyramids.

She was doing the honors of her salon when Roland entered the room. Always incapable, like the true creole that she was, of controlling her emotions, she gave a cry of joy and held out her hand to him. She knew his reckless bravery, and she knew, too, that if the young man had a dozen lives he would give them all for Bonaparte. Roland eagerly took the hand she offered him and kissed it with much respect. Josephine had known his mother in Martinique, and whenever she saw the son she never failed to mention his maternal grandfather, M. de la Clémencière, in whose magnificent gardens she used as a child to gather those splendid tropical fruits unknown to our colder climates.

A subject of conversation was, therefore, ready at hand. Josephine asked tenderly after Madame de Montrevel's health and that of her daughter and her little son. Then, these questions asked and answered, she added: —

"My dear Roland, I must now pay attention to my guests; but try to stay after the others, or else let me see

you alone to-morrow. I have something to say to you about *him* (and she glanced at Bonaparte), and a thousand things to tell you." Then, with a sigh, and pressing the young man's hand, she added, "Whatever happens, you will never leave him, will you?"

"Whatever happens! What will happen?" asked Roland.

"I know," said Josephine; "and I am certain that after you have talked ten minutes with Bonaparte you will know too. Meantime, watch and hear, and hold your tongue."

Roland bowed and retired apart, resolved, as Joséphine advised, to play the part of observer.

But what was there to observe? Three principal groups were in the salon. The first gathered around Madame Bonaparte, the only woman present, and this was more a flux and a reflux than a group. The second surrounded Talma, and had in it Arnault, Parseval-Grandmaison, Monge, Berthollet, and two or three other members of the Institute. The third was that in which Bonaparte himself was standing; in it were Talleyrand, Barras, Lucien, Admiral Bruix,[1] Rœderer, Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Fouché, Réal, and two or three generals, among whom was Lefebvre.

In the first group they talked fashions, music, theatre; in the second, literature, sciences, dramatic art; in the third, of everything except that of which they were all thinking. No doubt this reserve was not in keeping with Bonaparte's own feeling at the moment; for after sharing for a short time in the commonplace conversation that went on, he suddenly took the arm of the ex-bishop of Autun, and led him into the embrasure of a window.

"Well?" he said, interrogatively.

[1] Not to be confounded with Rear-Admiral De Brueys, who was killed at Aboukir, August 1, 1798. Admiral Bruix, the negotiator with Talleyrand of the 18th Brumaire, did not die till 1805.

Talleyrand looked at Bonaparte with that air which belonged to none but him, and said: —

"What did I tell you of Sieyès, general?"

"You advised me to get the support of those who regard the friends of the Republic as Jacobins, and to rely upon it that Sieyès was at their head."

"I was not mistaken."

"Will he yield?"

"Better still; he has yielded."

"The man who wanted to shoot me at Fréjus, for having landed without performing quarantine!"

"Oh, no; not for that."

"For what, then?"

"For not having looked at him or spoken to him at a dinner given by Gohier."

"To tell you the truth, that was intentional; I cannot endure that unfrocked monk."

Bonaparte perceived, a moment too late, that the speech he had just made was like the sword of the archangel, two-edged; if Sieyès was unfrocked, Talleyrand was unmitred. He gave a rapid glance at the face of his companion; but the ex-bishop was smiling his softest smile.

"Then I can count upon Sieyès, can I?" said Bonaparte.

"I will answer for him."

"And Cambacérès and Lebrun, — have you seen them?"

"I took Sieyès in hand as the most recalcitrant; Bruix took the two others."

The admiral, though still in the midst of the group, was carefully observing the general and the diplomatist; he knew their conversation had a special importance. Bonaparte made him a sign to join them. A less able man would have done so at once; Bruix made no such mistake. He walked about the room for a time, and then, as if he had just perceived Talleyrand and Bonaparte talking together, he went up to them.

"Bruix is an uncommonly able man," said Bonaparte, who judged men as much by little things as by great ones.

"And above all very cautious, general," said Talleyrand.

"Yes; but we shall need a corkscrew to pull anything out of him."

"Oh, no; he will talk frankly enough now, and face the question."

Talleyrand was right. Bruix had no sooner joined them than he said, in words as plain as they were concise: —

"I have seen them; they waver."

"They waver! Cambacérès and Lebrun waver! Lebrun I can understand, — a sort of man of letters, a moderate, a puritan; but Cambacérès — "

"It is as I tell you."

"Did not you hold out to them the idea that I intended to make each of them a consul? "

"I did not get as far as that," replied Bruix, laughing.

"Why not? " asked Bonaparte.

"Because this is the first word you have said about any such intention, citizen general."

"True," said Bonaparte, biting his lips.

"Am I to repair the omission? " asked Bruix.

"No, no," exclaimed Bonaparte, hastily; "they would think I was in need of them. I won't have any evasions. They must decide to-day, without other conditions than those you have offered to them; to-morrow it will be too late. I feel myself strong enough to stand alone; and I now have Sieyès and Barras."

"Barras? " repeated the other two men, astonished.

"Yes, Barras, who treated me as a little corporal, and said he would n't send me back to Italy because I had made my fortune there, and it was useless to return. Well, Barras — " He stopped.

"Barras? "

"Oh, nothing." Then, changing his mind, "Faith! I may as well tell you all. What do you suppose Barras said at a dinner yesterday in my presence? That it was impossible to go on any longer under such a constitution as that of the year III. He admitted the necessity of a

dictatorship, said he meant to retire and throw up the reins of government, adding that he himself was looked upon as worn-out, and the Republic needed new men. Guess on whom he thinks of laying off his power. I'll give it you, as Madame de Sévigné says, in a hundred, thousand, ten thousand! No other than General Hédouville, a worthy man enough, but I have only to look him in the face to make him lower his eyes, — my glance must be blasting! It results that this morning Barras came to my bedside and excused himself as best he could for the nonsense he talked the night before, and declared that I alone could save the Republic, and that he had come to place himself at my disposal, to do what I wished, and to take any position I might assign to him, begging me to promise that if I had any plan in my head I would count on him, — yes on him, — and he would be true to me till doomsday."

"And yet," said Talleyrand, unable to resist a play of words, "doomsday is not a name to conjure liberty with."

Bonaparte glanced at the ex-bishop.

"Yes," he said, "I know that Barras is your friend, and the friend of Fouché and Réal; but he is not mine and I shall prove it to him. Go back to Lebrun and Cambacérès, Bruix, and let them make or break their bargain as they choose." Then looking at his watch and frowning, he added, "It seems to me that Moreau keeps me waiting."

So saying, he turned away and went toward the group that surrounded Talma. The two diplomatists watched him. Then the admiral said in a low voice: —

"What do you think, my dear Maurice, of such gratitude toward the man who picked him out at the siege of Toulon, when he was nothing but a lieutenant, who trusted him to defend the Convention on the 13th Vendémiaire, and appointed him, when only twenty-six years old, to command the Army of Italy?"

"I think, my dear admiral," replied M. de Talleyrand, with his pallid, mocking smile, "that there are some

MOREAU, GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF DE L'ARMÉE DU RHIN.

services so great that they can be paid for only by ingratitude."

Just then the door opened, and General Moreau was announced. At this announcement, which was more than a piece of news, — it was a great surprise to most of those who were present, — every eye was turned on the door.

Moreau appeared. At this particular period three men were in the eyes of France. Moreau was one of them. The two others were Bonaparte and Pichegru. Each had become a sort of symbol. Pichegru, since the 18th Fructidor, was the symbol of monarchy; Moreau, ever since he had been christened Fabius, was the symbol of the Republic; Bonaparte, symbol of war, towered over them both by the adventurous aspect of his genius.

Moreau was then in the full strength of his age, — we might say the full strength of his genius, if one of the characteristics of genius were not decision. Now, no one was ever more undecided than the famous cunctator. He was then thirty-six years of age, tall, with a sweet, calm, firm countenance that must have resembled that of Xenophon.

Bonaparte had never seen him, and he had never seen Bonaparte. While the one was fighting on the Adige and the Mincio, the other was fighting on the Danube and the Rhine.

When Bonaparte now caught sight of him he went toward him.

"Welcome, general!" he said.

Moreau smiled with extreme courtesy.

"General," he answered, while all present made a circle round them to see how the new Cæsar would meet the new Pompey, "you come victorious from Egypt, while I have come defeated from Italy."

"A defeat which was not yours, and for which you are not responsible, general. It was Joubert's fault. If he had gone to the Army of Italy as soon as he was made its commander-in-chief, it is more than probable that the

Russians and Austrians, with the troops they then had, could not have resisted him. But he stayed in Paris for his honeymoon, and that fatal month, which the poor fellow paid for with his life, gave the enemy time to gather up their reinforcements. The surrender of Mantua alone gave them fifteen thousand men the night before the battle. It was impossible that our brave army should not be overwhelmed by such united forces."

"Alas! yes," said Moreau; "it is always the greater number that conquers the smaller."

"A great truth, general!" cried Bonaparte; "an indisputable truth."

"And yet," said Arnault, joining in the conversation, "you have yourself, general, beaten great armies with little armies."

"If you were Marius, instead of being the author of 'Marius' you would not have said that, my dear poet. Even when I beat great armies with little armies — now listen to this, you young men, who obey to-day and will command to-morrow — it was always the great armies who conquered the little armies."

"I don't understand," said Arnault and Lefebvre together.

But Moreau made a sign with his head to say that he understood it. Bonaparte continued: —

"Follow my theory; for it contains the whole art of war. When with lesser forces I am in presence of a great army, I gather mine together with great rapidity and fall like a thunderbolt on a wing of the great army and overthrow it; then I profit by the disorder into which this manœuvre never fails to throw the enemy's forces to attack them on the other side, again with my whole army. I thus fight in detail, and the victories which have always resulted are, as you see, the triumph of the many over the few."

As the great general was concluding his definition of his own genius the door opened and a servant announced that dinner was served.

"General," said Bonaparte, leading Moreau to Josephine, "take in my wife. Gentlemen, follow them."

On this invitation all present moved from the salon to the dining-room.

After dinner, on pretence of showing him a magnificent sabre he had brought from Egypt, Bonaparte took Moreau into his study. There the rivals remained a full hour, shut up together. What passed between them? What compact was signed? What promises were made? No one has ever known. Only, when Bonaparte returned alone to the salon and Lucien asked him, "Well, what of Moreau?" he answered: —

"Just as I foresaw; prefers military power to political power. I have promised him the command of an army." Bonaparte smiled as he uttered the last words. "Meantime — " he added.

"Meantime?" asked Lucien.

"He will have that of the Luxembourg. I am not sorry to make him the jailer of the Directors before I make him the conqueror of the Austrians."

The next day the following appeared in the "Moniteur:"

PARIS, 17th Brumaire. Bonaparte has presented to Moreau a Damascus sword set with precious stones, which he brought from Egypt, the value of which is estimated at twelve thousand francs.

XXI.

THE SCHEDULE OF THE DIRECTORY.

We have said that Moreau, furnished no doubt with instructions, left the little house in the rue de la Victoire, while Bonaparte returned alone to the salon. Everything was noted and commented upon in such a company as was there assembled; the absence of Moreau, the return alone of Bonaparte, and the visible good humor which animated his face, were all observed.

The eyes that fastened upon him most eagerly were those of Roland and Josephine. Moreau *for* Bonaparte added twenty chances to the success of the plot; Moreau *against* Bonaparte took away fifty. Josephine's eyes were so supplicating that as he left Lucien Bonaparte pushed his brother toward his wife. Lucien understood his meaning and went up to Josephine.

"All is well," he said.

"Moreau?"

"With us."

"I thought him too republican."

"He has been made to see that all is for the good of the Republic."

"I thought him too ambitious," said Roland.

Lucien started and looked at the young man.

"That 's the right idea of him."

"Then," said Josephine, "if he is so ambitious he will not let Bonaparte seize the power."

"Why not?"

"Because he will want it for himself."

"Yes; but he will wait to get it ready-made, inasmuch as he can't create it, and is afraid to seize it."

During this time Bonaparte joined the group which had formed, after dinner as well as before it, around Talma; remarkable men are always a centre of attraction.

"What are you relating, Talma?" asked Bonaparte. "They seem to be listening to you with great attention."

"Yes, but my reign is over," said the actor.

"How is that?"

"I do as the citizen Barras has done; I abdicate."

"Has the citizen Barras abdicated?"

"So they say."

"Is it known who takes his place?"

"It is surmised."

"Is it one of your friends, Talma?"

"Time was," said Talma bowing, "when he did me the honor of saying that I was his."

"Well, in that case, I shall ask for your influence."

"Granted," said Talma, laughing; "it only remains to ask how it can serve you."

"Get me sent back to Italy; Barras would not let me go."

"Ha!" said Talma. "Don't you remember the old song, general, —'Why go to the woods when the laurels are clipped'?"

"Oh Roscius, Roscius! have you grown a flatterer in my absence?"

"Roscius was the friend of Cæsar, general, and when the conqueror returned from Gaul he probably said to him just what I have said to you."

Bonaparte laid his hand on Talma's shoulder.

"Would he have said the same words after the crossing of the Rubicon?"

Talma looked Bonaparte straight in the face.

"No," he replied. "He would have said to him, like the augur, 'Beware the ides of March.'"

Bonaparte slipped his hand into his breast as if in search of something; finding the dagger of the Jehu Brethren he grasped it convulsively. Had he a presentiment of the conspiracies of Aréna, of Saint-Régent, of Cadoudal?

Just then the door opened and a servant announced "General Bernadotte."

"Bernadotte!" muttered Bonaparte. "What does he want here?"

Since Bonaparte's return from Egypt Bernadotte had held aloof from him, refusing all the advances which the commander-in-chief had made to him, directly or through his friends. The fact is that Bernadotte had long discerned the politician beneath the great-coat of the soldier; the dictator beneath the general; for Bernadotte, king as he afterwards allowed himself to be made, was a very different Republican from Moreau. Besides, Bernadotte considered that he had reason to complain of Bonaparte. His military career had not been less brilliant than that of the young general; his fortunes were destined to run parallel to the latter's to the end, — with this exception, that Bernadotte was to die upon his throne. It is true that he did not conquer that throne; he was called to it.

The son of a lawyer at Pau, Bernadotte, born in 1765, that is to say five years before Bonaparte, was in the ranks as a private soldier when only seventeen. In 1789 he was only a sergeant-major. But those were the days of rapid promotion. In 1794 Kléber announced him brigadier-general on the battle-field, where in fact, Bernadotte had decided the fortunes of the day. Becoming general of division he took a brilliant part in the affairs at Fleurus and at Juliers, forced Maestricht to capitulate, took Altdorf, and protected against an army twice as numerous as his own, the retreat of Joubert. In 1797 the Directory ordered him to take seventeen thousand men to Bonaparte. These seventeen thousand men were his veterans, the old soldiers of Kléber, Marceau, and Hoche, the soldiers of the Sambre-et-Meuse; and yet Bernadotte forgot all rivalry and seconded Bonaparte with all his might; taking part in the passage of the Tagliamento, capturing Gradiska, Trieste, Laybach, Idria; bringing back to the Directory, after the campaign, the flags of the enemy, and accepting, possibly

with reluctance, the embassy to Vienna, while Bonaparte was made commander-in-chief of the army of Egypt.

At Vienna a riot excited by the tricolor flag hoisted above the embassy, for which the ambassador was unable to obtain redress, forced him to demand his passports. On his return to Paris, he was made minister of war by the Directory. An underhand proceeding of Sieyès, who was annoyed by Bernadotte's republicanism, induced the latter to resign his post. The resignation was accepted, and at the time when Bonaparte landed at Fréjus the late war minister had been three months out of office. Since Bonaparte's return several of Bernadotte's friends had endeavored to bring about his reinstatement, but Bonaparte was opposed to it; this became known to Bernadotte and the result was an hostility between the two generals, none the less real because not openly avowed.

Bernadotte's appearance in Bonaparte's house was therefore an event almost as extraordinary as the presence of Moreau. And the entrance of the conqueror of Maestricht caused as many heads to turn as the entrance of the conqueror of Rastadt. But instead of going forward to meet him as he had met Moreau, Bonaparte merely turned round and awaited the new-comer.

Bernadotte from the threshold of the door, cast a rapid glance around the room; he distinguished and analyzed the groups, and though he must have seen Bonaparte in the midst of the chief one, he went up to Josephine, who was reclining on a low couch at the corner of the fireplace, beautiful as ever and draped like the statue of Agrippina in the Pitti, and addressing her with chivalric courtesy inquired for her health; after which, he raised his head for the first time as if to look for Bonaparte. Everything was of such vital significance at this moment that all present took notice of this by-play.

Bonaparte with his rapid, comprehending intellect, was not the last to notice the same thing; he was seized with impatience, and instead of awaiting Bernadotte any longer

in the midst of the group where he happened to be, he turned abruptly to the embrasure of a window as if to challenge the ex-minister of war to follow him. Bernadotte bowed graciously to right and left, and, controlling his usually mobile face into an expression of perfect calmness, he walked towards Bonaparte, who awaited him as a wrestler awaits his antagonist, the right foot forward, the lips tightened. The two men bowed to each other; but Bonaparte made no movement to extend his hand to Bernadotte; and Bernadotte made none to take it.

"Is it you?" said Bonaparte. "I am glad to see you."

"Thank you, general," replied Bernadotte. "I have come because I wished to give you certain explanations."

"I did not recognize you at first."

"Yet I think, general, that my name was announced by your servant in a voice loud enough to prevent any doubt as to my identity."

"Yes, but he announced General Bernadotte."

"Well?"

"Well, I saw a man in citizen's dress and though I recognized you I doubted if it was really you."

For some time past Bernadotte had affected the wearing of civilian clothes in preference to his uniform.

"You know," he said, laughing; "I am now only half a soldier. I was retired by citizen Sieyès."

"It seems that it was rather lucky for me when I landed at Fréjus that you were no longer minister of war."

"Why so?"

"You said, so I am told, that if you had received the order to arrest me for violating quarantine you would have executed it."

"I did say it and I repeat it, general. I have always been a faithful observer of discipline. As a minister I was a slave to law."

Bonaparte bit his lips.

"And will you say, after that, that you have not a personal enmity to me?"

"A personal enmity to you, general?" replied Bernadotte. "Why should I have it? We have always gone together, almost in the same stride; I was even made general before you. My campaigns on the Rhine, though they were less brilliant than yours on the Adige, were not less useful to the Republic; and when I had the honor to serve under your orders in Italy you found me, I hope, a subordinate devoted, if not to the man, at least to the country which he served. It is true that since your departure, general, I have been more fortunate than you in not having had the responsibility of a great army, like yours in Egypt, which, if we are to believe Kléber's last despatches, you have left in a disastrous position."

"Kléber's last despatches! What do you mean? Has Kléber written?"

"Are you ignorant of it, general? Has the Directory not informed you of the complaints of your successor? If not, it is a great weakness on their part; and I am doubly glad to have come here, not only to correct in your mind what has been said of me, but to tell you what is being said of you."

Bonaparte fixed an eye as darkling as that of an eagle on Bernadotte.

"And what are they saying of me?" he asked.

"They say that if you must come back you ought to have brought the army with you."

"Had I a fleet? You forgot that Brueys allowed his to be burned."

"They also say, general, that if you could not bring back your army it would have been better had you remained with it."

"That is what I should have done, monsieur, if events had not recalled me to France."

"What events, general?"

"Your defeats."

"Pardon me, general, you mean Schérer's defeats."

"Yours as well."

"I was not responsible for the generals who commanded our armies of the Rhine and of Italy until I was minister of war. If you will enumerate the defeats and victories after that time, general, you will see on which side the scale will turn."

"You certainly do not intend to tell me that matters are in a good state?"

"No; but I do tell you that they are not in so desperate a state as you are affecting to believe — "

"I, affecting to believe! Really, general, to hear you one would suppose I had some interest in lowering France in the eyes of foreigners."

"I don't say that ; I say that I wish to settle with you the balance of our victories and defeats for the last few months; and as I came for that, and am now in your house, and in the position of an accused person — "

"Or of an accuser."

"An accused person in the first instance — I begin."

"And I listen," said Bonaparte, visibly on thorns.

"My ministry dates from the 30th Prairial, the 8th of June if you prefer it; we will not quarrel about words."

"Which means that we are to quarrel about things."

Bernadotte went on without replying: —

"I became minister of war on the 8th of June; that is to say, a few days after the raising of the siege of Saint-Jean-d'Acre."

Bonaparte bit his lips.

"I did not raise the siege until after I had ruined the fortifications," he said.

"That is not what Kléber wrote — but the affair does not concern me." Then he added, smiling: "It happened while Clark was minister."

There was a moment's silence, during which Bonaparte endeavored to force Bernadotte to lower his eyes; not succeeding, he said: —

"Go on."

Bernadotte bowed and continued: —

"Perhaps no minister of war — and the archives of the ministry are there to refer to — ever received the portfolio under more critical circumstances, — civil war within, a foreign enemy at our gates, discouragement in our veteran armies, absolute destitution of means to equip new ones. That was what I had to face on the 8th of June. From that date an active correspondence kept up by me with the civil and military authorities revived their courage and their hopes. My addresses to the armies (this may have been a mistake) were not those of a minister to soldiers, they were those of a comrade to comrades; just as my addresses to the various administrators were those of a citizen to his fellow-citizens. I appealed to the courage of the armies and to the hearts of Frenchmen; I obtained all that I asked. The National Guard reorganized itself with renewed zeal; legions were formed upon the Rhine, on the Mosel. Battalions of veterans took the place of old regiments to reinforce the troops that were guarding our frontier; to-day our cavalry is recruited by a remount of forty thousand horses, and one hundred thousand conscripts have received with cries of 'Vive la République!' the flags under which they will fight and conquer — "

"But," interrupted Bonaparte, sarcastically, "it seems to me that you are making an apology for yourself."

"Be it so. I shall divide my discourse into two parts. The first will be a contestable apology; the second an incontestable array of facts. I will set aside the apology and proceed to facts. June 17 and 18, the battle of the Trebia. Macdonald wished to fight without Moreau; he crossed the Trebia, attacked the enemy, was beaten by him, and retreated to Modena. June 20, battle of Tortona; Moreau defeated the Austrian Bellegarde. July 22, surrender of the citadel of Alexandria to the Austro-Russians. So far the scale turns to defeat. July 30, surrender of Mantua, another check. August 15, battle of Novi; this time it was more than a check, it was defeat; take note of it, general, for it was the last. At the very moment we were

fighting at Novi, Masséna was maintaining his positions at Zug and Lucerne, and strengthening himself on the Aar and on the Rhine; while Lecourbe, on the 14th and 15th of August, took the Saint-Gothard. August 19, battle of Bergen; Brune defeats the Anglo-Russian army, forty thousand strong, and captures the Russian general Hermann. On the 25th, 26th, and 27th of the same month, the battles of Zurich; Masséna defeats the Austro-Russian under Korsakoff. Hotze and three other Austrian generals are taken prisoners. The enemy lost twelve thousand men, a hundred cannon, and all his baggage; the Austrians, separated from the Russians, could not rejoin them until after they were driven beyond the Lake of Constance. That series of victories stopped the progress the enemy had been making since the beginning of the campaign; from the time Zurich was retaken France was secure from invasion. August 30 Molitor defeated the Austrian generals Jellachich and Linken and drove them back into the Grisons. September 1 Molitor attacked and defeated General Rosemberg in the Mutterthal. On the 2d Molitor forced Souvaroff to evacuate Glarus, to abandon his wounded, his cannon, and sixteen hundred prisoners. The 6th, General Brune defeated a second time the Anglo-Russians who were under the command of the Duke of York. On the 7th General Gazan took possession of Constance. On the 8th you landed near Fréjus. Well, general," continued Bernadotte, "as France is probably about to pass into your hands, it is well that you should know the exact state in which you take her. What we are now doing, general, is history; and it is important that those who may have an interest in some day falsifying history shall find upon their path the denial of Bernadotte."

"Is that said for my benefit, general?"

"I say that for flatterers. You have pretended, so it is said, that you were forced to return because our armies were destroyed, because France was in danger, the Repub-

lic at bay. You may perhaps have left Egypt under that impression; but all such fears must have given way to a totally different belief after you reached France."

"I ask no better than to believe as you do, general," answered Bonaparte, with dignity. "And the more grand and powerful you prove France to be, the more grateful am I to those who have secured her grandeur and her power."

"That result is plain, general: three armies defeated, the Russians exterminated, the Austrians beaten and made to fly, twenty thousand prisoners, a hundred pieces of cannon, fifteen flags, all the baggage of the enemy in our power, nine generals taken or killed, Switzerland free, our frontiers safe, the Rhine our limit, — so much for Masséna's contingent and the situation of Helvetia. The Anglo-Russian army twice defeated, utterly discouraged, abandoning its artillery, baggage, munitions of war and commissariat, even to the women and children who came with the British; eight thousand French prisoners, effective men, returned to France; Holland completely evacuated, — so much for Brune's contingent and the situation in Holland. The rear-guard of General Klenau forced to lay down its arms at Villanova; a thousand prisoners and three pieces of cannon fallen into our hands, and the Austrians driven back beyond Bormida; in all, counting the combats at la Stura and Pignerol four thousand prisoners, sixteen cannon, Mondovi, and the occupation of the whole region between the Stura and the Tanaro, — so much for Championnet's contingent and the situation in Italy. Two hundred thousand men under arms, forty thousand mounted cavalry, — that is my contingent, mine, and the situation in France."

"But," asked Bonaparte, with a satirical air, "if you have, as you say, two hundred and forty thousand soldiers under arms what do you want of the fifteen or twenty thousand men I have in Egypt, who are very useful there as colonizers?"

"If I say we want them back, general, it is not for any use we may wish to make of them, but in the fear of some disaster overtaking them."

"What disaster do you expect to a force commanded by Kléber?"

"Kléber may be killed, general; and behind Kléber who is there? Menou. Kléber and your twenty thousand men are doomed, general."

"How doomed?"

"Yes, the sultan will send his troops; he controls by land. The English will send their fleet; they control the sea. We, who have neither the land nor the sea, we shall be compelled to take part from here in the evacuation of Egypt and the capitulation of our army."

"You take a black view of things, general."

"The future will show which of us two has seen things as they are."

"What would you have done in my place?"

"I do not know; but I would never have abandoned those whom France entrusted to me, even if I had to bring them back by way of Constantinople. Xenophon on the banks of the Tigris was in a far more desperate situation than you were on the banks of the Nile; but he brought his ten thousand back to Ionia. And those ten thousand were not the children of Athens, not his own fellow-countrymen; they were only mercenaries."

After Bernadotte had uttered the word "Constantinople" Bonaparte listened no longer; the name seemed to start a new train of ideas in his mind which he followed in solitary thought. He laid his hand on the arm of the astonished Bernadotte, and with fixed eyes, like a man who pursues through space the phantom of a vanished project, he said: —

"Yes, yes! I thought of it. That was why I persisted in taking that hovel of a Saint-Jean-d'Acre. Here you thought it obstinacy, the loss of useless men, the sacrifice to self-love of a third-rate general who fears he shall be

blamed for a defeat. What should I have cared for the raising of the siege of Saint-Jean-d'Acre if Saint-Jean-d'Acre had not been a barrier in the way of the grandest project that was ever conceived? Cities! Hey! good God! I could take as many cities as ever Alexander or Cæsar took; but it was Saint-Jean-d'Acre that it was necessary to take; and if I had taken it do you know what I should have done?"

And his burning eye fixed itself upon Bernadotte, who, this time, lowered his under the flame of genius.

"What I should have done," repeated Bonaparte, — and, like Ajax, he seemed to threaten heaven with his clenched hand, — "if I had taken Saint-Jean-d'Acre I should have found the treasure of the pacha and three hundred thousand stand of arms. With that I should have raised and armed all Syria so maddened by the tyranny of Djezzar that each time I attacked him the populations prayed to God for his overthrow. I should have marched on Damascus and Aleppo. I should have swelled my army with all the malcontents. Advancing into the country I should, step by step, have proclaimed to the peoples the abolition of slavery, the annihilation of the tyrannical government of the pachas. I should have reached Constantinople with those armed masses, and the Turkish empire would have been overthrown. I should have founded there in its place, in Constantinople, a great empire, which would have fixed my place in history higher than Constantine, higher than Mohammed the Second! Perhaps I should even have returned to Paris by Adrianople, or by Vienna, after annihilating that House of Austria. Ah! my dear general, that is the plan the wretched little town of Saint-Jean-d'Acre brought to naught!"

And he so far forgot to whom he was speaking, as he followed the shadows of his vanished dream, that he actually called Bernadotte "my dear general." The latter, almost appalled by the grandeur of the project Bonaparte had just divulged to him, made a step backward.

"Yes," he said, "I see what you want; you have betrayed yourself. East or West, a throne! A throne? so be it! Why not? Count upon me to help you conquer it, — but elsewhere than in France. I am a republican, and I will die a republican."

Bonaparte shook his head as if to shake off the thoughts that held him in the clouds.

"I, too, am a republican," he said; "but see what has come of your Republic!"

"What matters that?" cried Bernadotte. "It is not to a word nor to a form that I am faithful, but to a principle. Let the Directors give me power, and I shall know how to defend the Republic from its internal enemies as I have defended it from the foreign enemy."

As he said the words Bernadotte raised his eyes, and his glance encountered that of Bonaparte. Two naked blades clashing together never sent forth a lightning more vivid, more terrible.

For some time past Josephine had watched the interview of the two men with anxious attention. She saw that dual glance teeming with reciprocal menace; she rose hastily and went to Bernadotte.

"General," she said.

Bernadotte bowed.

"You are intimate with Gohier, are you not?" she continued.

"He is one of my best friends, madame," said Bernadotte.

"Well, we dine with him the day after to-morrow, the 18th Brumaire; dine there yourself and bring Madame Bernadotte, — I should be so glad to know her better."

"Madame," said Bernadotte, "in the days of the Greeks you would have been one of the three Graces; in the Middle Ages you would have been a fairy; to-day you are one of the most adorable women whom I know."

And making three steps backward and bowing, he contrived to take leave politely without including Bonaparte in his bow. Josephine followed him with her eyes until

he had left the room. Then, turning to her husband she said: —

"Well, it was not as successful with Bernadotte as with Moreau, was it?"

"Adventurous, bold, disinterested, sincere in his republicanism, inaccessible to seduction, he is a human obstacle; you may turn round it but you can never overturn it."

Then, leaving the salon without taking leave of his guests, he went upstairs to his study, followed by Roland and Bourrienne.

They had hardly been there a quarter of an hour when the handle of the lock turned softly, the door opened, and Lucien appeared.

XXII.

THE SKETCH OF A DECREE.

Lucien was evidently expected. Not once had Bonaparte mentioned his name since entering the study; but, in spite of this silence, he had turned his head three or four times with increasing impatience to the door, and when the young man appeared an exclamation of contentment escaped his lips.

Lucien Bonaparte, the general's youngest brother, was born in 1775, which made him now barely twenty-five years old. Since 1797, that is, from the age of twenty-two and a half, he had been a member of the Council of the Five Hundred, who, to do honor to the commander-in-chief, had made him their president. With the projects that were now in his mind nothing could have been more fortunate for Bonaparte.

Frank and loyal, republican to the core, Lucien in seconding his brother's projects believed that he was doing even better service to the Republic than to the future First Consul. To his mind, no one could save it a second time so well as he who had saved it once. It was with such feelings in his heart that he now came to talk with his brother.

"Here you are!" said Bonaparte. "I have been waiting for you impatiently."

"I thought so; but I had to wait till no one would notice my departure."

"Did you manage it?"

"Yes; Talma was telling a story about Marat and Dumouriez. Interesting as it was I deprived myself of the pleasure of hearing it and slipped off."

"I have just heard a carriage driving away; the person who got into it could n't have seen you coming up my private stairs, could he?"

"The person who drove off was I myself; the carriage was mine. If that is not seen in the courtyard everybody will think me gone."

Bonaparte breathed freer.

"Well, now let us hear," he said; "how have you employed your day?"

"I have not wasted my time, you may be sure of that."

"Are we to have a decree of the Council?"

"It was drawn up to-day and I have brought it to you — the rough draught, I mean — so that you may see if there is anything you want changed or added."

"Let me see it," said Bonaparte. Then, taking the paper hastily from Lucien's hand he began to read: —

ART. I. The Legislative body is transferred to the commune of Saint-Cloud; the two branches of the Council will hold their sessions in the two wings of the palace.

"That 's the important article," said Lucien. "I made them put it first so that it might strike the minds of the people at once."

"Yes, yes," said Bonaparte, and he continued: —

ART. II. They will assemble there to-morrow, 20th Brumaire.

"No, no," said Bonaparte, to-morrow, 19th. "Change the date, Bourrienne;" and he passed the paper to his secretary.

"Are you sure you will be ready for the 18th?"

"Sure. Fouché said to me yesterday: 'Make haste, or I won't answer for the result.'"

"19th Brumaire," quoted Bourrienne, returning the paper to the general. Bonaparte resumed: —

ART. II. They will assemble there to-morrow, 19th Brumaire, at mid-day. All deliberations are forbidden elsewhere and before the above date.

Bonaparte read that article over twice.

"It will do," he said. "There is no double meaning there," and he continued: —

ART. III. General Bonaparte is charged with the enforcement of this decree; he will take all necessary measures for the safety of the National legislature.

A satirical smile flickered on the stony lips of the reader; then, almost immediately, he went on: —

The general commanding the 17th military division, the guard of the Legislature, the stationary national guard, the troops of the line within the boundaries of the commune of Paris, and those in the constitutional arrondissement, and throughout the limits of the said 17th division, are placed directly under his orders, and are directed to regard him as their commanding officer.

"Bourrienne, add: 'All citizens will render him assistance when called upon.' The bourgeois love to meddle in political matters, and when they really can help a plan it would be a pity not to give them the satisfaction."

Bourrienne obeyed. Then he returned the paper to the general, who went on: —

ART. IV. General Bonaparte is summoned before the Council to receive a copy of the present decree and to make oath thereto. He will consult with the inspecting commissioners of both branches of the Council.

ART. V. The present decree shall be transmitted immediate, by messenger, to all members of the Council of the Five Hundred and to the Executive Directory. It shall be printed and posted, and promulgated throughout the communes of the Republic by special messengers.

Done at Paris, this . . .

"The date is left blank," said Lucien.

"Put '18th Brumaire,' Bourrienne; the decree must take everybody by surprise. It must be issued at seven o'clock

in the morning and at the same hour, or even a trifle earlier, it must be posted on all the walls of Paris."

"But suppose the Ancients won't consent to issue it?" said Lucien.

"All the more reason for posting it, ninny," replied Bonaparte. "We must act as if it were issued."

"Am I to correct a fault in grammar I see in that last paragraph?" asked Bourrienne, laughing.

"Where?" demanded Lucien, in the tone of an aggrieved author.

"The word 'immediate'" replied Bourrienne. "You can't say 'transmitted immediate;' it ought to be 'immediately.'"

"Oh, never mind," said Bonaparte, "I shall act immediately; you may trust me for that." Then, after a moment's reflection, he added: "As to what you said just now about their not being willing to pass the decree, there 's a very simple way to get it passed."

"What is that?"

"Convoke all the members we are sure of at six o'clock in the morning, and at eight o'clock all those of whom we are not sure. The best men are with us; it will be devilishly hard to make us lose the majority."

"But six o'clock for some and eight for the others —" said Lucien doubtfully.

"Employ two secretaries; one of them can make a mistake." Then turning to Bourrienne he said, "Write this:"

And walking up and down the room he dictated without the slightest hesitation, like a man who had long thought over and prepared what he dictated, the following proclamation; stopping every now and then beside Bourrienne to see if the secretary's pen were following his every word: —

CITIZENS! — The Council of the Ancients, the trustee of the Nation's wisdom, has issued the subjoined decree: it is authorized by articles 102 and 103 of the Constitution.

This decree enjoins me to take measures for the safety of the National Legislature, and its necessary and momentary removal.

Bourrienne looked at Bonaparte; *instantaneous* was the word he meant to use, but as he did not correct himself Bourrienne allowed the word *momentary* to stand. Bonaparte continued to dictate: —

The Legislature will find means to avoid the imminent danger into which the disorganization of all parts of the administration has brought us.

But it needs, at this crisis, the united support and confidence of patriots. Rally around it; it offers the only means of establishing the Republic on the bases of civil liberty, internal prosperity, victory, and peace.

Bonaparte read the proclamation through, and nodded his head in sign of approval. Then he looked at his watch.

"Eleven o'clock," he said; "there is still time."

Taking Bourrienne's place he wrote a few words in the form of a note, sealed it, and put the address: "To the citizen Barras."

"Roland," he said, when that was done, "take a horse out of the stable, or a carriage in the streets, and go to Barras's house. I have asked him for an interview at twelve o'clock to-morrow night. I want an answer."

Roland left the room. A moment later the gallop of a horse was heard disappearing in the direction of the rue du Mont-Blanc.

"Now, Bourrienne," said Bonaparte, after listening to the sound, "to-morrow, at midnight, whether I am in the house or not in it, you will take my carriage and go in my stead to Barras."

"In your stead, general?"

"Yes. He will do nothing all day because he will expect me at night to accept him on my side. You will keep my appointment at midnight and tell him that I have such a bad headache I have had to go to bed, but

that I will certainly be with him at seven in the morning. He will believe you, or he won't believe you; but, in any case, it will be too late for him to act against us. By seven in the morning I shall have ten thousand men under my command."

"Very good, general. Have you any other orders to give me?"

"No, not to-night," replied Bonaparte. "Be here to-morrow early."

"And I?" asked Lucien.

"See Sieyès, — he has the Ancients in the hollow of his hand; take measures with him. I don't want him to be seen in my house, nor myself in his; for if by chance we fail, he is a man to repudiate. After to-morrow I intend to be master of my own actions and to have no ties to any one."

"Shall you want me to-morrow?"

"Come here at night and report what happens."

"Are you going back into the salon?"

"No; I shall wait for Josephine in her room. Bourrienne, tell her so as you pass through, so that she may get rid of the people as soon as possible."

Then, saluting his brother and Bourrienne with the same wave of his hand, he took a private passage which led from his study to Josephine's bedroom. There, lighted by a single alabaster lamp which made the face of the conspirator seem paler than ever, Bonaparte listened to the noise of the carriages as they one by one left the house. At last the sounds ceased, and five minutes later Josephine entered the room.

She was alone, and held a candlestick of two branches in her hand. Her face, lighted by the double flame, expressed the deepest anxiety.

"Well," asked Bonaparte, "what is the matter?"

"I am frightened," she said.

"Frightened at what, — those fools of Directors, or the lawyers of the two Councils? Nonsense! I have

Sieyès with me in the Ancients; and Lucien in the Five Hundred."

"Then all goes well?"

"Wonderfully well."

"You sent for me, and I took it into my head it was to tell me bad news."

"Pooh! if I had bad news do you suppose I should tell it to you?"

"How comforting that is!"

"Well, don't be uneasy; I have nothing but good news — but I have given you a part in the conspiracy."

"What part?"

"Sit down there and write to Gohier."

"What, — that we can't dine with him?"

"Just the reverse. But I want him and his wife to come and breakfast with us; between those who like each other there can't be too much intercourse."

Josephine sat down at a little rosewood writing-table.

"Dictate," she said. "I will write."

"Bah!" he exclaimed, "so that they may recognize my style! Nonsense, you know a great deal better than I do how to write one of those charming notes there is no resisting."

Josephine smiled at the compliment, and turned her forehead to Bonaparte who kissed it lovingly; then she wrote the following note, which we copy from the original: —

To the citizen Gohier, President of the Executive Directory of the French Republic:

"Is that the way to begin?" she said.

"Exactly; as he won't keep the title long we ought not deprive him of it for the short time left."

"Don't you mean to make him something?"

"I 'll make him anything he pleases if he does exactly what I want. Now go on, my dear."

Josephine resumed her pen and wrote as follows: —

Pray come, my dear Gohier, with your wife, and breakfast with me to-morrow at eight o'clock. Don't fail, for I have some very interesting things I want to talk of with you. Adieu. With the sincerest friendship,

Yours,

LA PAGERIE-BONAPARTE.

"I said *to-morrow*," remarked Josephine. "Ought I to date the note 17th Brumaire?"

"You won't be wrong," said Bonaparte, "for there 's midnight striking."

In fact, another day had fallen into the gulf of time; the clock struck twelve strokes. Bonaparte listened to them gravely and dreamily. Twenty-four hours only separated him from the solemn day for which he had been scheming a month and of which he had dreamed for years.

Let us do now what he would gladly have done then, and spring across those intervening hours to the day which history has not yet judged, and see what happened in various parts of Paris where the events we are about to relate produced an overwhelming impression.

XXIII.

ALEA JACTA EST.

At seven in the morning Fouché, minister of police entered the bedroom of Gohier, president of the Directory.

"Oh, ho!" said Gohier, when he saw him. "What has happened now, monsieur le ministre, to give me the pleasure of seeing you at this early hour?"

"Then you don't yet know about the decree?" said Fouché.

"Decree? No, what decree?" said the worthy Gohier.

"The decree of the Council of Ancients."

"When did they issue it?"

"Last night."

"Does the Council meet at night?"

"When matters are urgent, yes."

"What does the decree say?"

"It transfers the legislative sessions to Saint-Cloud."

Gohier felt the blow; he saw the advantage which Bonaparte's daring genius would obtain by this isolation.

"Since when is the minister of police transformed into a messenger of the Ancients?" he asked.

"You are mistaken, citizen president," replied the ex-Conventional. "I am more the minister of police than ever this morning, for I have come to inform you of an act which may have the most serious consequences."

Not being as yet sure of how the conspiracy of the rue de la Victoire would turn out, Fouché was not averse to keeping a door open for retreat to the Luxembourg. But Gohier, honest as he was, knew the man too well to be his dupe.

"I ought to have been informed of the decree last night, citizen minister, instead of this morning," he said; "for in making the communication at this hour you are scarcely in advance of the official notice I shall probably receive in a few moments."

As he spoke, an usher opened the door and informed the president that a messenger from the Inspecting Commissioners of the Council of Ancients was there and asked to make him a communication.

"Let him come in," said Gohier.

The messenger entered and presented a letter to the president, who broke the seal hastily and read as follows :

CITIZEN-PRESIDENT, — The Inspecting Commission hasten to inform you of a decree removing the residence of the Legislative bodies to Saint-Cloud.

The decree will be forwarded to you at once; measures for the public safety are at present occupying our attention.

We invite you to meet with us immediately. You will find the Citizens Sieyès and Ducos already here.

Fraternally,

BARILLON.
FARGUES.
CORNET.

"Very good," said Gohier to the messenger, dismissing him with a wave of his hand.

The messenger departed. Gohier turned to Fouché.

"Ha!" he said. "The plot is well laid; they inform me of the decree, but they do not send it to me. Happily, you are here to tell the terms of it."

"But," said Fouché, "I don't know them."

"What! do you mean to say that there has been a session of the Council of Ancients, and you, the minister of police, do not know anything about it?"

"I knew it took place," said Fouché, "but I was not present."

"Why didn't you send a secretary or a stenographer

there who could give you an account of the meeting word for word, when you knew that in all probability that meeting would dispose of the fate of France? Ah! citizen Fouché, you are either the deepest or the shallowest minister of police that the country has ever seen."

"Have you any orders to give me, citizen president?" demanded Fouché.

"None, citizen minister," replied Gohier. "If the Directory thinks proper to give orders it will be to men who are worthy of their confidence. You can return to those who sent you," he added, turning his back upon the minister.

Fouché went out, and Gohier immediately rang his bell. An usher entered.

"Go to citizens Barras, Sieyès, Ducos, and Moulins, and beg them to come here at once. Ah! and ask Madame Gohier to step into my study and bring with her the note Madame Bonaparte wrote her inviting us to breakfast."

Five minutes later Madame Gohier entered, fully dressed, with the note in her hand. The invitation was for eight o'clock, it was then half-past seven, and it would take twenty minutes to drive from the Luxembourg to the rue de la Victoire.

"Here is the note, my dear," said Madame Gohier, giving it to her husband; "it says eight o'clock."

"Yes," said Gohier. "I was not in doubt about the hour, but about the day."

Taking the note from his wife's hand he read it over:

"Pray come, my dear Gohier, with your wife, and breakfast with me to-morrow at eight o'clock. Don't fail, for I have some very interesting things I want to talk of with you."

"Ah!" continued Gohier, "there is no room for doubt."

"Are we not going?" asked Madame Gohier.

"You are going, my dear, but not I. A strange event has occurred, which the citizen Bonaparte probably knows

all about, which will detain my colleagues and myself at the Luxembourg."

"A serious event?"

"Probably serious."

"Then I shall stay here with you."

"No, no, you can't be of any service to me here. Go to Madame Bonaparte; I may be mistaken, but, if anything extraordinary happens which seems to you alarming, let me know in some way or other; any message will do. I shall understand half a word."

"Very good, I will go; the hope of being useful to you is enough."

Just then the messenger who had been sent to the members of the Directory returned.

"General Moulins will be here in a moment," he said. "Citizen Barras is in his bath and will come as soon as he can; citizens Sieyès and Ducos went out early this morning and have not yet returned."

"They are the two traitors!" cried Gohier, "Barras is the dupe." Then, kissing his wife, he said to her, "Now, go."

As she turned to leave the room Madame Gohier came face to face with General Moulins; he — for his character was naturally impetuous — seemed furious.

"Pardon me," he said to Madame Gohier; then rushing to the president he cried: —

"Do you know what is going on, president?"

"No, but I suspect something."

"The Legislature is transferred to Saint-Cloud. General Bonaparte is commissioned to carry out the decree, and the troops are placed under his orders."

"Ha! the cat 's out of the bag," said Gohier. "Well, we shall have to unite and make a struggle."

"But have n't you heard? Sieyès and Ducos are not in the Luxembourg — "

"By heavens! they are at the Tuileries! But Barras is in his bath; let us go to Barras. The Directory can issue

decrees if there 's a majority, and we shall be three. I say again, we must make a struggle."

"Then let us send word to Barras to come here as soon as he is out of his bath."

"No, we had better go to him before he is out of it."

The two Directors left the room and hurried toward Barras's apartments. They found him actually in his bath, but they insisted on entering.

"Well?" said Barras as soon as he saw them.

"Have you heard?"

"I have heard nothing."

They told him what they knew themselves.

"Ah!" said Barras, "that explains everything."

"How do you mean?"

"Yes, that is why he did n't come last night."

"Who?"

"Why, Bonaparte."

"Did you expect him last night?"

"He sent an aide here to say he would call on me at eleven o'clock last night."

"And he did not come?"

"No; he sent Bourrienne in his carriage to say that a violent headache obliged him to go to bed, but he would be here this morning, early."

The Directors looked at each other.

"The whole thing is plain," they said.

"I have sent Bollot, my secretary," continued Barras, "a very intelligent fellow, to find out what he can."

He rang and a servant entered.

"As soon as citizen Bollot returns," said Barras, "ask him to come here."

"He is just getting out of the carriage."

"Tell him to come up at once."

But Bollot was already at the door.

"Well?" cried all the Directors.

"Well, General Bonaparte, in full uniform, accompanied by Generals Beurnonville, Macdonald, and Moreau, are on

their way to the Tuileries, where ten thousand troops are drawn up awaiting them."

"Moreau! Moreau with him!" exclaimed Gohier.

"On his right!"

"I always told you so," cried Moulins, with his military roughness. "Moreau is a sneak, and nothing else."

"Are you still determined to resist, Barras?" said Gohier.

"Yes," replied Barras.

"Then dress yourself, and join us in the council-room."

"Go," said Barras, "I 'll follow you."

The two Directors went to their usual council-room. After waiting ten minutes Moulins grew impatient.

"We ought to have stayed with Barras," he said; "for if Moreau is a sneak Barras is a knave."

Two hours later they were still waiting for Barras.

As it happened, Gohier and Moulins were no sooner out of Barras's bath-room than Talleyrand and Bruix entered it; and in talking with them, Barras forgot his appointment.

We will now see what had happened in the rue de la Victoire.

At seven o'clock, contrary to his usual custom, Bonaparte was up and waiting, in full uniform, in his bedroom. Roland entered. Bonaparte was perfectly calm, — he was on the eve of a battle.

"Has no one come yet, Roland?" he asked.

"No, general," said the young man; "but I heard the roll of a carriage just now."

"So did I," said Bonaparte.

At that moment a servant announced: —

"The citizen Joseph Bonaparte and the citizen General Bernadotte."

Roland questioned Bonaparte with a look, — was he to go or stay? He was to stay. Then he took his stand at the corner of a bookcase, like a sentinel at his post.

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed Bonaparte, seeing that Bernadotte

still wore civilian clothes; "you seem to have a positive horror of the uniform, general."

"And why the devil should I be in uniform at seven o'clock in the morning," retorted Bernadotte, "when I am not in active service?"

"You will be soon."

"I tell you I am retired."

"Yes; but I recall you to active service."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"In the name of the Directory?"

"Is there still a Directory?"

"Still a Directory! What do you mean?"

"Did you not see, as you came here, the troops who are drawn up in the streets leading to the Tuileries?"

"Yes, I saw them; and I was surprised."

"Those soldiers are mine."

"Pardon me," said Bernadotte; "I thought they belonged to France."

"Ha! to me, or to France; it is all one."

"I was not aware of that," said Bernadotte, coldly.

"Though you doubt it now, you will be certain of it to-night. Come, Bernadotte, this is the vital moment; decide!"

"General," said Bernadotte, "I am fortunate enough to be at this moment a simple citizen; let me remain so."

"Bernadotte, take care; he that is not for me is against me."

"General, pay attention to your words. You say 'Take care.' If that is a threat, you know very well that I fear nothing."

Bonaparte came up to him and took him by both hands. "Yes, I know that," he said; "and that is why I must have you with me. Not only do I value you, Bernadotte, but I love you. I leave you now with Joseph; he is your brother-in-law. Between brethren, damn it, there ought to be no quarrelling."

"And you — where are you going?"

"In your character of Spartan you are a rigid observer of the laws, are you not? Well, here's a decree issued last night by the Council of the Five Hundred, which confers upon me the immediate command of the troops in Paris. I was right, therefore, in telling you that the soldiers you met were my soldiers, inasmuch as they are under my orders."

And he put into Bernadotte's hand the copy of the decree which had been sent to him at six o'clock that morning. Bernadotte read the paper through attentively from the first line to the last.

"To this," he said, "I have nothing to object. Secure the safety of the National legislature, and all good citizens will be with you."

"Then be with me now, Bernadotte."

"Permit me, general, to wait twenty-four hours to see how you fulfil that mandate."

"Devil of a man!" cried Bonaparte; "have it as you will!" Then, taking him by the arm, and dragging him a few steps apart from Joseph, he continued, "Bernadotte, I want to play above-board with you."

"Why so?" said the other; "for I am not on your side."

"No matter for that. You are overlooking the game; and I want the lookers-on to see that I am not cheating."

"Do you bind me to secrecy?"

"No."

"You are right; for if you did, I should have refused to listen to your confidences."

"Oh, my confidences, they are not long! Your Directory is detested, your Constitution worn-out; you must make a clean sweep of both, and give another direction to the government. You don't answer me."

"I was waiting for the rest that you have to say to me."

"The rest that I have to say to you is, Go and put on your uniform. I cannot wait for you any longer. Join me at the Tuileries among our comrades."

Bernadotte shook his head.

"You think that you can count on Beurnonville, on Moreau, on Lefebvre," continued Bonaparte. "Look out of the window. Who is it you see there, — and there? Moreau and Beurnonville. As to Lefebvre, I don't see him; but I am certain I shall not go a hundred steps before I meet him. Well, will you decide?"

"General," answered Bernadotte, "I am the last man in the world to be carried away by the force of example, especially bad example. Let Moreau, or Beurnonville, or Lefebvre do as they please; I shall do as I ought."

"So, then, you positively refuse to accompany me to the Tuileries?"

"I do not wish to take part in a rebellion."

"A rebellion! a rebellion! And against whom, pray? Against a parcel of imbeciles, who are pettifogging from morning till night in their hovels!"

"Those imbeciles, general, are at this moment the representatives of law. The Constitution protects them; they are sacred to me."

"At least promise me one thing, iron rod that you are!"

"What is that?"

"To keep quiet."

"I will keep quiet as citizen; but —"

"But what? Come, I made a clean breast of it to you; do you do likewise."

"If the Directory gives me an order to act, I shall march against the disturbers, whoever they be."

"Ah, *ça!* do you think me ambitious?" cried Bonaparte.

Bernadotte smiled. "I suspect it," he said.

"Upon my word of honor," said Bonaparte, "you don't understand me. I have had enough of political turmoil, and what I want is peace. Ah, my dear fellow! Malmaison and fifty thousand francs a year, and I'd willingly resign the rest. You don't choose to believe me. Well, I invite you to come and see me there three months hence, and if you like pastorals we'll do one together. Well, au

revoir! I leave you with Joseph; in spite of your refusals, I shall expect you at the Tuileries. Hark! the friends are getting impatient."

Cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" were resounding.

Bernadotte paled slightly. Bonaparte noticed the pallor.

"Ah, ha!" he murmured to himself; "jealous! I was not mistaken. He 's an Athenian, not a Spartan."

During the hour that had now elapsed since the decree had been posted up, the salon, the antechambers, and the courtyard had become crowded. The first person whom Bonaparte encountered as he went down the stairway was his Corsican compatriot, Colonel Sébastiani, then commanding the 9th Dragoons.

"Ah! is that you, Sébastiani?" said Bonaparte. "Where are your men?"

"In line along the rue de la Victoire, general."

"Well disposed?"

"Enthusiastic! I have distributed among them ten thousand cartridges, which I had in store."

"Yes; but you had no right to draw those cartridges out without an order from the Commandant of Paris. Do you know that you have burned your ships, Sébastiani?"

"Then take me into yours, general. I have faith in your fortunes."

"Do you think me Cæsar?"

"Faith, I should n't be far wrong if I did. Down below there in the courtyard there are forty or more officers of all arms, without pay, whom the Directory has left for the last year in the utmost penury. They have no hope but in you, general; they are ready to die for you."

"That 's right. Go to your regiment and take leave of it."

"Take leave of it!"

"I exchange it for a brigade. Go, go!"

Sébastiani did not stay to be told twice. Bonaparte

continued his way. At the foot of the staircase he met Lefebvre.

"I am here, general," said Lefebvre.

"You! Well, where is the 17th military division?"

"I am awaiting my appointment to bring it into action."

"Have n't you been appointed?"

"By the Directory, yes; but, as I am not a traitor, I have sent in my resignation, so that they may know I am not to be counted on."

"And you have come here to be appointed by me, so that I may count upon you; is that it?"

"Precisely, general."

"Quick, Roland, a blank commission; fill in the general's name, so that I have only to put my name. I 'll sign it on the pommel of my saddle."

"That 's the true sort!" said Lefebvre.

"Roland!"

The young man, who had taken a few steps to obey the first order, came back to the general.

"Look on my mantel-shelf," said Bonaparte, in a low voice, "and get a pair of double-barrelled pistols, and bring them at the same time. One never knows what may happen."

"Yes, general," said Roland; "besides, I sha'n't leave you."

"Unless I send you to be killed elsewhere."

"Ah, true!" said the young man, carelessly, as he went off hastily to fulfil his double errand.

Bonaparte was continuing his way when he noticed a shadow in the corridor. He recognized Josephine and ran to her.

"Good God!" she cried; "is there so much danger?"

"What makes you think it?"

"The order I overheard you give to Roland."

"Serves you right for listening at doors! How about Gohier?"

"He did not come."

"Nor his wife?"

"His wife is here."

Bonaparte put aside his wife with his hand, and entered the salon. He found Madame Gohier alone and very pale.

"What!" said he, without any preamble, "is n't the president here?"

"It was not possible for him to come, general," replied Madame Gohier.

Bonaparte repressed an impatient movement.

"He absolutely must come," he said. "Write to him, madame, and say that I await him here. I will have the letter sent at once."

"Thank you, general, but my servants are here," replied Madame Gohier; "they will take it."

"Write, my dear friend; write at once," said Josephine, putting pens, ink, and paper before her.

Bonaparte stood so that he could see over her shoulder what she wrote. Madame Gohier looked at him fixedly. He stepped back a pace, bowing to her. She wrote the note, folded it, and looked about her for sealing-wax. It so happened — or was it intentional? — there was no wax, only wafers. She put one on the letter and rang the bell. A servant came.

"Give that to Courtois," said Madame Gohier, "and tell him to take it instantly to the Luxembourg."

Bonaparte followed the man with his eyes until the door was closed. Then he said to Madame Gohier: —

"I regret that I cannot breakfast with you; but if the president has business to attend to, so have I. You must breakfast with my wife. Good appetite to both of you!"

And he went out. At the door he met Roland.

"Here 's the commission, general," said the young man, "and a pen."

Bonaparte took the pen, and laying the paper on the inside of his aide-de-camp's hat, he signed the commission. Roland gave him the pistols.

"Did you look to them?" said the general.

Roland smiled. "Don't be uneasy," he said; "I 'll answer for them."

Bonaparte passed them through his belt, and as he did so, he muttered, "I wish I knew what she wrote to her husband."

"I can tell you, general," said a voice at his elbow.

"You, Bourrienne!"

"Yes. She wrote, 'You did right not to come; all that is happening here convinces me that the invitation was a trap. I will join you shortly.'"

"Did you unseal the letter?"

"General, Sextus Pompey gave a dinner on his galley to Mark Anthony and Lepidus. His freedman said to him, 'Shall I make you emperor of the world?' 'Can you do it?' 'Easily; I will cut the cable of your galley, and Mark Anthony and Lepidus are prisoners.' 'You should have done it without telling me,' replied Sextus; 'now I charge you, on your life, not to do it.' I remembered those words, general, — *You should have done it without telling me.*"

Bonaparte thought a moment; then he said: —

"You are mistaken. It was Octavius, and not Mark Anthony, who was on Sextus's galley with Lepidus."

And he went on his way to the courtyard, confining his blame to the historical blunder.

Hardly had the general appeared on the portico before the cry, "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded through the courtyard, and echoed into the street, where it was caught up and re-echoed from the lips of the dragoons drawn up in line before the gates.

"That 's a good omen, general," said Roland.

"Yes. Give Lefebvre his commission at once; and if he has n't a horse, let him take one of mine. Tell him to meet me in the court of the Tuileries."

"His division is there, already."

"All the more reason, then."

Glancing about him, Bonaparte now saw Moreau and

Beurnonville awaiting him, their horses held by the orderlies. He saluted them by a gesture of his hand, already that of a master rather than that of a comrade. Then, perceiving General Debel out of uniform, he went down the steps and approached him.

"Why are you in citizen's dress?" he asked.

"General, I was not notified. I happened to be passing along the street, and seeing the crowd before your house, I came in, fearing you were in some danger."

"Go and put on your uniform quickly."

"But I live the other side of Paris; it would take too long." But he made a step to retire, nevertheless.

"Where are you going?" asked Bonaparte.

"You shall see, general."

He had noticed an artillery-man on horseback. The man was about his size.

"Friend," said he, "I am General Debel. By order of General Bonaparte, lend me your coat and horse, and I 'll give you furlough for the day. Here 's a louis to drink to the health of the commander-in-chief. To-morrow, come and get your horse and uniform. I live in the rue Cherche-Midi, No. 11."

"Will nothing be done to me?"

"Yes, you shall be made a corporal."

"Very good," said the artillery-man; and he made over his coat and horse to General Debel.

During this time Bonaparte heard talking above him. He raised his head and saw Joseph and Bernadotte at his window.

"Once more, general," he said to Bernadotte, "will you come with me?"

"No," replied the other, firmly. Then, lowering his voice, he added, "You told me just now, to 'take care.'"

"Yes."

"Well, I say to you, 'Take care.'"

"Of what?"

"You are going to the Tuileries?"

"Of course."

"The Tuileries are very close to the place de la Révolution."

"Pooh!" said Bonaparte; "they 've moved the guillotine to the Barrière du Trône."

"What of that? The brewer Santerre still controls the faubourg Saint-Antoine, and Santerre is Moulins' friend."

"Santerre has been notified that at the first movement he makes he will be shot. Will you come?"

"No."

"As you like. You choose to separate your fortunes from mine; but I shall not separate mine from yours." Then, calling to his orderly, he said, "My horse!"

They brought him his horse. Seeing an artillery private close beside him, he exclaimed, "What are you doing here among the epaulets?"

The artillery-man began to laugh. "Don't you recognize me, general?" he said.

"Faith, it 's Debel! Where did you get that horse and uniform?"

"From that artillery-man you see over there on foot, in his shirt-sleeves. It will cost you a corporal's commission."

"You 're wrong, Debel; it will cost me two commissions: one for the corporal, one for the general of division. Forward, march, gentlemen! To the Tuileries!"

And bending forward on his horse, as he usually did, his left hand holding a slack rein, his right hand clenched and resting on his hip, with bent head and dreamy brow and a far-away look, he made his first steps along the glorious incline which was to lead him to a throne and — to Saint Helena.

XXIV.

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE.

As he issued from the courtyard into the rue de la Victoire, Bonaparte saw Sébastiani's dragoons drawn up in line of battle. He tried to address them, but they stopped him at his first words.

"We want no explanations," they cried, "we know you seek the good of the Republic. Vive Bonaparte!"

The cortège followed the streets which led from the rue de la Victoire to the Tuileries, amid the cries of "Vive Bonaparte!"

General Lefebvre, according to promise, was at the gate of the palace. Bonaparte, on his arrival at the Tuileries was welcomed with the same loud cheers that had followed him along the way. Once there, he raised his head and shook it. Perhaps he was not satisfied with the cry of that name, "Bonaparte." Was he dreaming already of "Vive Napoléon"?

He advanced in front of the troops, and there, surrounded by an immense staff, he read the decree of the Five Hundred which transferred the Legislature to Saint-Cloud and gave him the command of the armed forces.

Then, either from memory or impromptu (Bonaparte never admitted any one into such secrets as these), instead of the proclamation he had dictated the night before to Bourrienne, he pronounced these words:—

"Soldiers, the Council of Ancients has given me the command of the city and the army.

"I have accepted it, in order to second measures about to be undertaken for the good of the people.

"The Republic has been ill-governed for two years. You have hoped that my return would put an end to many evils. You have welcomed me with a unanimity which imposes obligations that I now fulfil. Fulfil yours and you will second your general with the vigor, trust, and firmness that I have always found in you.

"Liberty, victory, peace will restore the French Republic to the rank it occupied in Europe before incapacity and treachery caused her to lose it."

The troops applauded frantically: it was a declaration of war against the Directory; and soldiers will always applaud a declaration of war.

The general dismounted, and, amid cries and bravos, he entered the Tuileries. It was the second time he had crossed the threshold of the palace of the Valois, the arches of which had so ill sheltered the crown and head of the Bourbon who last had reigned there. Beside him walked the citizen Rœderer. Bonaparte started as he recognized him.

"Ah!" he said, "citizen Rœderer, you were here on the 10th of August."

"Yes, general," replied the future count of the Empire.

"It was you who advised Louis XVI. to go before the National Assembly."

"Yes."

"Bad advice, citizen Rœderer; I should not have followed it."

"We advise men according to what we know of them. I should not give to General Bonaparte the same advice I gave to Louis XVI. When a king has the fact of his flight to Varennes behind him, it is difficult to save him."

As Rœderer said the words they had reached a window which opened on the garden of the Tuileries. Bonaparte stopped, and seizing Rœderer by the arm, he said: —

"On the 20th of June I was there" (and he pointed with his finger to the terrace by the water) "behind that third linden; I saw, through the open window, that poor king with the phrygian cap upon his head; it was a piteous sight — I pitied him."

"What did you do?"

"I did nothing; I could not do anything; I was only a lieutenant of artillery; but I longed to follow the others and say to him in a whisper: 'Sire, give me four cannon and I'll sweep the whole rabble out!'"

What would have happened, we may ask, if lieutenant Bonaparte had followed his impulse, obtained what he wanted from Louis XVI. and *swept the rabble out*, — that is to say, the people of Paris? If on the 20th of June his cannon had made a clean sweep in the king's defence, would they have had to make another on the 13th Vendémiaire for the benefit of the Convention?

While Rœderer, who had become very grave, may have been turning over in his mind the opening facts recorded in his future "History of the Consulate," Bonaparte presented himself at the bar of the Council of Ancients, followed by his staff, and by all those who chose to follow him. When the tumult caused by this influx of persons had subsided, the president read over to the general the decree which invested him with the military power. Then, after requesting him to take the oath, the president added: —

"He who has never promised the Nation a victory that he did not win, cannot fail to keep, religiously, his present promise to serve his country faithfully."

Bonaparte stretched forth his hand and said solemnly:

"I swear it!"

All the generals of the suite repeated after him, each for himself: "I swear it!"

The oath was scarcely taken before Bonaparte noticed Barras's secretary, the same Bollot whom the Director had mentioned to his two colleagues that morning. He was there simply to see what happened and give an account

of it to his patron, but Bonaparte fancied he was sent on some secret mission by Barras. He resolved to spare him the first advance and went straight to the secretary.

"Have you come on behalf of the Directors?" he said. Then, without giving Bollot the time to answer, he went on: "What have they done with that France I left so brilliant? I left peace, I find war; I left victories, I find defeats; I left the millions of Italy, I find spoliation and penury! What have become of the hundred thousand Frenchmen whom I knew by name? They are dead!"

It was not exactly to the secretary of Barras that these words should have been said; but Bonaparte wished to say them, needed to say them, and little he cared to whom he said them. Perhaps even from his point of view, it was better he should say them to some one who could not answer him. At that moment Sieyès rose.

"Citizens," he said, "the Directors Moulins and Gohier demand admittance."

"They are no longer Directors," said Bonaparte, "for there is no longer a Directory."

"But," objected Sieyès, "the Directory has not yet sent in its resignation."

"Then admit them, and let them give it," retorted Bonaparte.

Moulins and Gohier entered. They were pale but calm. They knew they came to force a struggle, and behind their resistance a thought of the Sinnamary may have loomed. The exiles whom they sent there on the 18th Fructidor, 1797, pointed the way.

"I see with satisfaction," said Bonaparte, hastening to say it, "that you yield to our wishes and those of your two colleagues."

Gohier made a step forward, and said firmly: —

"We do not yield to either your wishes or those of our two colleagues, because the latter have resigned, but to the Law. It requires that the decree which transfers the legislative body to Saint-Cloud shall be proclaimed without

delay. We have come here to fulfil the duty which the law imposes on us, firmly determined to defend it against all factious persons, whosoever they may be, who attempt to attack it."

"Your zeal does not surprise us," replied Bonaparte, coldly. "And it is because you are a man who loves his country that we expect you to unite with us."

"Unite with you! and why?"

"To save the Republic."

"Save the Republic! There was a time, general, when you had the honor of being its prop; but to-day the glory of saving it is reserved for us."

"How will you save it?" asked Bonaparte. "With the means your Constitution gives you? Why, that Constitution is crumbling on all sides, and even if I were not accelerating its fall at this moment, it could not last eight days longer."

"Ah!" cried Moulins, "at last you acknowledge your hostile projects!"

"My projects are not hostile!" cried Bonaparte, striking the floor with the heel of his boot. "The Republic is in peril; it must be saved, and I shall do it."

"You do it!" said Gohier. "It seems to me that it is for the Directory, and not for you to say: 'It shall be done!'"

"There is no longer a Directory."

"We heard before we entered that you had said so."

"There has been no Directory since Sieyès and Roger-Ducos resigned from it."

"You are mistaken. There is a Directory while three members of it remain, and neither Moulins nor I nor Barras have sent in our resignations."

At this moment a paper was slipped into Bonaparte's hand, and a voice said in his ear, "Read it." He read it; then he said aloud: —

"You are mistaken yourself. Barras has resigned, for here is his resignation. The law required three Directors

to make a Directory; you are but two, and whoever resists the law, as you said just now, is a rebel." Then, giving the paper to the president, he continued, "Add the resignation of the citizen Barras to that of the citizens Sieyès and Ducos, and proclaim the fall of the Directory. I shall now announce it to my soldiers."

Moulins and Gohier were confounded. This resignation of Barras cut the ground from under their feet.

Bonaparte had nothing more to do before the Council of Ancients, but there was very much for him to do in the court of the Tuileries. He went down the palace stairs followed by those who had accompanied him up.

The soldiers no sooner caught sight of him than the cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded even more noisily and eagerly than before. The general sprang into the saddle and made a sign that he wished to speak to them. Ten thousand voices which had burst into cries were hushed in a moment. Silence fell, as if by enchantment.

"Soldiers!" said Bonaparte, in a voice so powerful that every one present heard it. "Your companions in arms who are now on the frontier are deprived of the necessaries of life. The people are miserable. Those who are guilty of such evils are the factious men against whom you are here assembled to-day. I hope before long to lead you to victory; but first, we must deprive all those who stand in the way of public order and general prosperity of their power to do harm."

Whether it was weariness and disgust at the Directory, or the fascination exercised by the magic being who again called them to victory, — victory, so long forgotten in his absence, — certain it is that cries of wild enthusiasm arose, and, like a train of burning powder, flew from the Tuileries to the Carrousel, from the Carrousel to the adjacent streets. Bonaparte profited by the movement; turning to Moreau, he said: —

"General, I will give you a proof of the immense confidence I have in you. Bernadotte, whom I left in my house

and who refused to join us, had the audacity to tell me that if he received orders from the Directory, he should execute them against whoever the disturbers might be. General, I confide to you the guardianship of the Luxembourg. The tranquillity of Paris and the safety of the Republic are in your hands."

Then, without awaiting Moreau's answer, he put his horse to a gallop and rode to the opposite end of the line.

Moreau, led by military ambition, had consented to play a part in this great drama; he was now forced to accept that which the author assigned him. Gohier and Moulins, on their return to the Luxembourg found nothing changed, apparently; the sentries were as usual at their posts. They retired to one of the salons used for deliberations to consult together. But they had scarcely begun their conference when General Jubé, the commandant of the Luxembourg, received orders to join Bonaparte at the Tuileries with the guard of the Directory. Their places were at once filled by Moreau and a portion of the troops who had just been electrified by Bonaparte. Nevertheless the two Directors drew up a message to the Council of the Five Hundred, in which they protested energetically against what had been done. When it was prepared Gohier handed it to his secretary, and Moulins, half dead from inanition, went to his own apartments to get some food.

It was then almost four in the afternoon. An instant later Gohier's secretary came to him in much agitation.

"Well," said Gohier, "why have you not gone?"

"Citizen president," replied the young man, "we are prisoners in the palace."

"What! prisoners?"

"The guard is changed; General Jubé is no longer in command."

"Who takes his place?"

"I think I heard them say General Moreau."

"Moreau? impossible! — and Barras, the villain! where is he?"

"He has started for his country-place at Grosbois."

"Ah! I must see Moulins!" cried Gohier, rushing to the door.

But at the entrance to the corridor he met a sentry who barred the way. Gohier insisted.

"No one can pass," said the sentry.

"Not pass!"

"No."

"But I am president Gohier."

"No one can pass," repeated the sentry; "that is the order."

Gohier saw it was useless to say more; the employment of force was impossible. He returned to his own rooms.

During this time General Moreau had gone to see Moulins; he wished to justify himself. Without listening to a word the ex-Director turned his back upon him; and then, as Moreau persisted, he said: —

"General, go into the antechamber; that is the place for jailers."

Moreau bowed his head and understood for the first time into what a fatal trap his honor had fallen.

At five o'clock Bonaparte started on his return to the rue de la Victoire; all the generals and superior officers in Paris accompanied him. The blindest among them, those who had never understood the 13th Vendémiaire, who had not yet understood the return from Egypt, now saw blazing over the Tuileries the star of the future; and as everybody could not be a planet, the point to be considered was who should be satellite.

The shouts of "Vive Bonaparte!" which came from the lower part of the rue du Mont Blanc and swept like a sonorous wave toward the rue de la Victoire told Josephine of her husband's return. The impressionable creole awaited him with keen anxiety, and now sprang to meet him in such agitation that she was unable to utter a single word.

"Come, come!" said Bonaparte, becoming the kindly man he was in the bosom of his family, "compose yourself; everything has been done to-day that could be done."

"Is it all over?"

"Oh, no!" said Bonaparte.

"Must it be done over again to-morrow?"

"Yes; but to-morrow it will be only a formality."

That "formality" was rather rough; but as everybody knows of the events at Saint-Cloud, we shall dispense with relating them, and turn at once to their results, impatient as we are to get back to the real subject of our drama, from which the grand historical figure we have introduced has for a moment diverted us.

One word more: on the 20th Brumaire, at one in the morning, Bonaparte was appointed First Consul for ten years. He himself caused the appointment of Cambacérès and Lebrun as his colleagues under the title of Second Consuls, being firmly resolved to concentrate in his own person all the functions of not only the two consuls, but those of the ministers. On the night of the 20th Brumaire he slept at the Luxembourg in Gohier's bed; the latter having been set at liberty, as well as his colleague Moulins.

Roland was made governor of the Luxembourg.

XXV.

AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

Some time after this military revolution, which created a great stir in Europe, convulsing the continent for a time as a tempest convulses the ocean,— some time after, we say, on the morning of the 30th Nivôse, better known to our readers as the 20th of January, 1800, Roland in looking over the voluminous correspondence which his new office entailed upon him, found, amid fifty other letters asking for an audience, the following: —

Monsieur le Gouverneur, — I know your loyalty to your word; and you will see that I rely upon it.

I wish to speak to you for five minutes, and during that time I must remain masked.

I have a request to make of you. This request you will grant or deny. In either case, as I shall have entered the palace of the Luxembourg in the interests of the First Consul Bonaparte and the royalist party, to which I belong, I shall ask for your word of honor that I be allowed to leave it as freely as you allow me to enter it.

If to-morrow, at seven in the evening, I see a solitary light in the window above the clock, I shall know that Colonel Roland de Montrevel has pledged me his word of honor, and I shall boldly present myself at the little door of the left wing of the palace opening on the garden. I shall strike three blows at intervals of two and one, after the manner of the free-masons.

In order that you may know to whom you engage, or refuse, your word, I sign a name which is known to you, — that name having been, under circumstances you have probably not forgotten, pronounced before you.

Morgan,
Member of The Company of Jehu.

Roland read the letter twice, thought it over for a time, then suddenly he rose, went into the First Consul's study, and gave it to him silently. The latter read it without betraying the slightest emotion or even surprise ; then, with a laconism that was wholly Lacedæmonian, he said, —

" Put the light."

The next evening at seven o'clock a candle shone in the window above the clock, and five minutes later Roland in person was waiting at the garden door. He had scarcely stood there an instant before three blows were struck, at intervals of two and one, after the manner of the free-masons.

The door was instantly opened ; a man wrapped in a cloak was visible, sharply defined against the dun atmosphere of the wintry night. As for Roland he was completely hidden in shadow. Seeing no one, the man in the cloak remained motionless for a moment.

" Enter ! " said Roland.

" Ah ! it is you, colonel ? "

" How do you know it is I ? " asked Roland.

" I recognize your voice."

" My voice ! but during the few moments we were together in the dining-room at Avignon I do not remember that I said a word."

" In that case I must have heard your voice elsewhere."

Roland searched in vain for a key to this mystery; but the other said, gayly : —

" Is the fact that I recognize your voice any reason why we should stand at this door ? "

" No, certainly not," said Roland. " Follow me ; take the lapel of my coat, for I have purposely had the lights put out in the passages and stairs which lead to my room."

" I am much obliged for your intention ; but I know that I could cross the palace on your word in broad daylight with perfect safety."

" You have my word," said Roland, " and may rely upon it."

Morgan needed no encouragement; he followed his guide without hesitation. At the head of the staircase Roland took a passage that was also pitch dark, went twenty steps, opened a door, and entered his own room. Morgan followed him. The room was lighted by two wax-candles only. Once there, Morgan took off his cloak and laid his pistols on a table.

"What are you doing?" asked Roland.

"With your permission," replied Morgan, laughing, "I am making myself more comfortable."

"But those pistols you have just laid aside —"

"Ah! did you think it was against you that I brought them?"

"Against whom then?"

"Why, that damned police; you can easily imagine that I don't care to let citizen Fouché lay hold of me, — at any rate not without burning the moustache of the first of his minions that lays hands upon me."

"But once here, you feel you have nothing to fear?"

"Exactly," said the other, "I have your word."

"Then why don't you unmask?"

"Because my face only half belongs to me; the other half belongs to my companions. Who knows if one of us being recognized may not drag the others to the guillotine? For of course you know, colonel, we don't hide from ourselves that danger."

"Then why do you risk it?"

"Ah, what a question! Why do you go into battle, when a ball may make a hole in your breast or take off your head?"

"That is a very different thing, permit me to say so; on the battle-field I risk an honorable death."

"Ha! do you suppose that on the day I get my head cut off by the revolutionary triangle I shall think myself dishonored? Not the least in the world! I am a soldier like yourself; only we can't all serve our cause in the same way. Every religion has its heroes and martyrs; happy

the heroes in this world, and happy the martyrs in the next."

The young man uttered these words with a conviction which moved, or rather we should say, astonished Roland. Morgan, however, very quickly abandoned enthusiasm, and reverted to the gayety which appeared to be a distinctive trait of his character.

"But I did not come here to talk political philosophy," he said. "I came to ask you to let me speak to the First Consul."

"Speak to the First Consul!" exclaimed Roland.

"Yes. Read my letter over again; did I not tell you I had a request to make?"

"Yes."

"Well, that request is to let me speak to General Bonaparte."

"But allow me to say that, as I did not expect any such request —"

"It surprises you — makes you uneasy, perhaps? My dear colonel, you may, if you can't trust my word, search me from head to foot, and you will see that I have no weapons except those pistols; and those I have n't now, inasmuch as they are on your table. More than that, take those pistols, one in each hand, and stand between the First Consul and me, and blow my brains out at the first suspicious motion I make. Will that suit you?"

"But if I disturb the First Consul and ask him to see you, how can I be sure that your communication is worth his hearing?"

"Oh, as for that, I 'll answer for it!" Then, in his joyous tones, he added: "I am, for the time being, the ambassador of a crowned, or rather a discrowned head — a condition which does not make it less reverenced by noble hearts. Moreover, I shall take up very little of your general's time, Monsieur Roland; the moment the conversation seems to him too long he can dismiss me; he will not have to say the word twice, I assure you."

Roland was silent and thoughtful for a moment.

"Is it to the First Consul only that you can make this communication?"

"To the First Consul only, because only the First Consul can give the answer."

"Very well; wait until I take his orders."

Roland made a step toward the general's room; then stopped and cast an uneasy glance at a mass of papers lying on his table. Morgan intercepted the look.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you are afraid that in your absence I should read those papers. If you only knew how I detest reading! If my death-warrant lay on that table I believe I should excuse myself from reading it on the ground that it was a clerk's business. Colonel Roland, my feet are rather cold and I am going to sit in your armchair and warm them. I shall not stir till you return."

"Very good, monsieur," said Roland, and he went to the First Consul.

Bonaparte was talking with General Hédouville commanding the troops in La Vendée; hearing the door open he turned impatiently.

"I told Bourrienne I would not see any one!"

"So he said, general; but I answered that I was nobody."

"That's true. What do you want? Be quick."

"He is in my room."

"Who?"

"The man of Avignon."

"Ah, ha! what does he want?"

"To see you."

"See me?"

"Yes, you, general; does that surprise you?"

"No, but what does he want to say to me?"

"He refuses to tell me; but I think I can say he is neither a fool nor a madman."

"But he may be an assassin."

Roland shook his head.

"Well, if it is you who introduce him —"

"He is willing that I should be of the conference and stand between you and him."

Bonaparte reflected a moment.

"Bring him in," he said.

"But you know, general, that except me —"

"Yes; General Hédouville will be so kind as to wait a few moments; our conference is of a nature that is not exhausted in one interview. Go, Roland."

Roland left the room, crossed Bourrienne's office, re-entered his own room, and found Morgan where he had left him, warming his feet.

"Come!" he said, "the First Consul expects you."

Morgan rose and followed Roland. When they entered Bonaparte's study the latter was alone. He cast a rapid glance on the Companion of Jehu, and felt no doubt that he was the same man he had seen at Avignon.

Morgan had paused a few steps from the door, and was looking with curiosity at Bonaparte, convincing himself that he was the same dark young man he had seen at the table d'hôte on the occasion of his returning the money to Jean Picot.

"Come nearer," said the First Consul.

Morgan bowed and made three steps forward.

Bonaparte returned the bow with a slight motion of his head.

"You told my aide-de-camp, Colonel Roland, that you had a communication to make to me?"

"Yes, citizen First Consul."

"Does that communication require a private interview?"

"No, citizen First Consul; although it is of such importance that —"

"You would rather I were alone?"

"Yes, but prudence —"

"The most prudent thing in France, citizen Morgan, is courage."

"My presence here, general, is enough to prove that I agree with you."

Bonaparte turned to his aide-de-camp.

"Leave us, Roland," he said.

"But, general!—" objected Roland.

Bonaparte went up to him and said in a low voice:—

"I see how it is! you are curious to know what this knight of the highway has to say to me. Well, don't be uneasy, I will tell you afterwards."

"That is not it! but if, as you said just now, the man should be an assassin—"

"Did n't you assure me he was not? Come, don't be a baby; go!"

Roland left the room.

"Now that we are alone, monsieur," said the First Consul, "speak!"

Without replying in words, Morgan drew a letter from his pocket and gave it to the general. Bonaparte examined it. It was addressed to him, and the seal bore the fleurs-de-lis of France.

"Oh!" he said, "what is this, monsieur?"

"Read it, citizen First Consul."

Bonaparte opened the letter and looked at the signature.

"Louis," he said.

"Louis," repeated Morgan.

"What Louis?"

"Louis de Bourbon, I presume."

"Monsieur le Comte de Provence, brother of Louis XVI.?"

"Consequently, Louis XVIII., now that his nephew the dauphin is dead."

Bonaparte looked curiously at the stranger; it was evident that the name of Morgan was a pseudonym, intended to hide his real name. Then, turning his eyes upon the letter he read as follows:—

JANUARY 30, 1800.

Whatever may be their apparent conduct, monsieur, men like you can never inspire distrust. You have accepted an exalted post, and I thank you for doing so. You know, better than others, what force and

power are needed to make the happiness of a great nation. Save France from her own madness and you will fulfil the desire of my heart; restore her king, and future generations will bless your memory. If you doubt my gratitude, choose your own place and the future of your friends. As for my principles, I am a Frenchman, — forbearing by nature, still more by judgment.

No! the conqueror of Lodi, of Castiglione, of Arcola, cannot prefer an empty celebrity to fame. Lose no more precious time. We can secure the glory of France. I say *we* because I have need of Bonaparte for that which he cannot achieve without me. General, the eyes of Europe are upon you, glory awaits you, and I am eager to restore my people to happiness.

Louis.

Bonaparte turned to the young man, who remained erect, motionless, and silent as a statue.

"Do you know the contents of this letter?" he asked.

The young man bowed: "Yes, citizen First Consul."

"It was sealed."

"It was sent unsealed under cover to the person who entrusted me with it. Before giving me that letter he made me read it, that I might know its full importance."

"Can I know the name of the person who entrusted you with it?"

"Georges Cadoudal."

Bonaparte started slightly.

"You know Georges Cadoudal?"

"He is a friend of mine."

"Why did he entrust it to you, rather than to others?"

"Because he knew that in telling me to give it to you with my own hand, it would be done."

"You have certainly kept your promise, monsieur."

"Not altogether, citizen First Consul."

"How do you mean? Have you not given the letter to me yourself?"

"Yes, but I promised to bring back an answer."

"And if I tell you that I shall not make one?"

"You will have answered, — not exactly as I could have wished, but, at any rate, it will be an answer."

Bonaparte reflected for several moments. Then, shaking his shoulders as if to cast off reflection, he exclaimed: —

"They are fools!"

"Who, citizen First Consul?"

"Those who write me such letters as that — fools, arch-fools! Do they take me for a man who patterns his conduct by the past? Play Monk! what good would that do? Bring back another Charles II.? No, faith! that's not worth while. When a man has Toulon, the 13th Vendémiaire, Lodi, Castiglione, Arcola, Rivoli, the Pyramids behind him, he's no Monk! he has a right to aspire to something else than a duchy of Albemarle and the command of the forces by sea and land of his Majesty King Louis XVIII.!"

"For that reason you are asked to make your own conditions, citizen First Consul."

Bonaparte started at the sound of a voice, as though he had forgotten that any one was present.

"Not counting," he went on, "that it is a ruined family, a dead branch of a rotten trunk. The Bourbons have so intermarried with one another that the race has depraved itself; all its vigor, all its sap was used up in Louis XIV. You know history, monsieur?" said Bonaparte, turning to the young man.

"Yes, general," he answered, "that is, as well as a *ci-devant* can know it."

"Well, you must have observed in history, in the history of France especially, that each race has its point of departure, its culmination, its decadence. Look at the direct line of the Capets; starting from Hugues Capet they attained their grandeur in Philippe-Auguste and Louis IX., and fell with Philippe V. and Charles IV. Look at the Valois; starting from Philippe VI. they culminated in François I. and fell with Charles IX. and Henri III. See the Bourbons; starting with Henri of Navarre they have their culminating point in Louis XIV. and fall with Louis XV. and Louis XVI. — only, they fall lower than the others;

lower in debauchery with Louis XV., lower in misfortune with Louis XVI. You talk to me of the Stuarts, and you point me to the example of Monk. Will you tell me who succeeded to Charles II.? James II. And who to James II.? William of Orange, a usurper. Would n't it have been a great deal better, I ask you, if Monk had put the crown on his own head? Well, if I were fool and madman enough to give back the throne to Louis XVIII., who, like Charles II. could have no children, his brother, like James II., would succeed him as Charles X.; and, like James II., he would be driven off the throne and out of the country by some William of Orange. No, no! God has not put the destiny of the great and glorious country which we call France into my hands that I should cast it back to those who have gambled with it and lost it."

"Permit me to remark, general, that I did not ask you for all that."

"But I, I ask you —"

"You are doing me the honor to take me for posterity."

Bonaparte started, turned round, saw to whom he was speaking, and was silent.

"I only asked," continued Morgan, with a dignity which surprised the man he addressed, "for a yes, or a no."

"And why do you want that?"

"To know whether we must continue to make war upon you as an enemy or fall at your feet as a savior."

"War!" said Bonaparte, "war! Madmen they are who war with me; can they not see that I am the elect of God?"

"Attila said the same thing."

"Yes, but he was the elect of destruction, I of a new era; the grass withered where he stepped; the harvests ripen where my plough furrows. War! tell me what has become of those who have made it against me. They lie in the plains of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Cairo."

"You forget La Vendée; La Vendée is still afoot."

"Afoot, yes! but where are her leaders; where La Rochejaquelin, Lescure, Cathelineau; where d'Elbée, Bonchamps, Stofflet, Charette?"

"You speak of men only: the men have been mown down, it is true; but the principle is there, erect; and around it and for it are fighting Susannet, Autichamp, Grignon, Frotté, Châtillon, Cadoudal; the younger may not be worth the elder, but if they die as their elders died, what more can we ask?"

"Let them beware! If I decide on a campaign in La Vendée, I'll send them no Santerres, no Rossignols —"

"The Convention sent Kléber, and the Directory, Hoche! —"

"I shall send no one; I shall go myself."

"Nothing can happen to them worse than happened to Lescure and to Charette."

"It may happen that I pardon them."

"Cato has taught us that Cæsar's pardon may be escaped."

"Ha, remark what you are doing, — you are quoting a republican!"

"Cato was one of the men whose example can be followed, no matter to what party we belong."

"And suppose I were to tell you that I hold La Vendée in the hollow of my hand?"

"You!"

"And that within three months she will lay down her arms if I choose?"

The young man shook his head.

"You do not believe me?"

"I hesitate to believe you."

"If I affirm to you that what I say is true, if I prove it to you by telling you the means, or rather the men, by whom it will be brought about, what then?"

"If a man like General Bonaparte affirms a thing to me, I shall believe it; and if that thing which he affirms is the pacification of La Vendée, I shall say to him: Beware! Better for you La Vendée fighting than La Vendée conspiring. La Vendée fighting means the sword, La Vendée conspiring means the dagger."

"Ah yes! I know your dagger," said Bonaparte; "here it is."

And he took from a drawer the dagger which he had taken from Roland, and laid it on the table within reach of Morgan's hand.

"But," he added, "there is some distance between the dagger of an assassin and my breast. Try."

And he advanced to the young man with a flaming eye.

"I did not come here to assassinate you," said Morgan, coldly, "later, if I think your death necessary to the triumph of our cause I shall do my best; and if I fail it will not be because you are Marius and I the Cimbrian. Have you anything else to say to me, citizen First Consul?" continued the young man, bowing.

"Yes; tell Cadoudal that whenever he wishes to fight the national enemy, instead of fighting Frenchmen, I have a colonel's commission ready signed in my desk for him."

"Cadoudal commands, not a regiment, but an army; why should you think he would step back from general to colonel? Have you nothing else to say to me, citizen First Consul?"

"Yes; have you any means of sending my answer to the Comte de Provence?"

"You mean King Louis XVIII.?"

"Don't let us squabble over words; I mean to him who wrote me that letter."

"His envoy is now in the camp at Aubiers."

"Well, I have changed my mind; I shall send a written answer. Those Bourbons are so blind they would certainly misinterpret my silence."

And Bonaparte, sitting down at his desk, wrote the following letter, with a care and precision that showed he wished to make it legible:—

I have received your letter, monsieur. I thank you for the good opinion you express of me. You must not wish for your return to France; it could only be over a hundred thousand dead bodies.

Sacrifice your own interests to the peace and welfare of France; history will applaud you for it. I am not insensible to the misfortunes of your family; I should hear with pleasure that you were surrounded by all that could contribute to the tranquillity of your retreat.

BONAPARTE.

Then folding and sealing the letter he directed it to "Monsieur le Comte de Provence," gave it to Morgan, and called Roland as if he knew that the latter was not far off.

"General!" said the young officer, appearing instantly.

"Conduct monsieur to the street yourself," said Bonaparte; "until then, you are responsible for him."

Roland bowed in sign of obedience, and motioned to the young man, who said not a word, to pass before him; then he followed him out. But before leaving the room Morgan cast a last look at Bonaparte. The latter was standing motionless, mute, his arms folded, his eyes fixed on the dagger, which occupied his thoughts more than he was willing to admit even to himself.

As they crossed Roland's room, the Companion of Jehu gathered up his cloak and his pistols. While he was putting the latter in his belt, Roland said to him: —

"The citizen First Consul seems to have shown you a dagger which I gave him."

"Yes, monsieur," answered Morgan.

"And you recognized it?"

"Not that one in particular; all our daggers are alike."

"Well, then," said Roland, "I shall tell you where it came from."

"Ah, where was that?"

"From the breast of a friend of mine into which your companions, perhaps you yourself, thrust it."

"Possibly," said the young man, carelessly; "but your friend must have exposed himself to punishment."

"My friend wished to see what was happening at night in the Chartreuse of Seillon."

"He did wrong."

"But I did the same wrong the night before; why did nothing happen to me?"

"Probably some talisman protects you."

"Monsieur, let me tell you something. I am a straightforward man who walks by daylight; I have a horror of dark, mysterious ways."

"Happy those who can walk by daylight on the highroads, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"That is why I shall tell you of an oath I have taken, Monsieur Morgan. As I drew the dagger you have seen from the breast of my friend — carefully, that I might not draw his soul with it — I swore that it was war to the death between his murderers and me. It was largely to tell you that, monsieur, that I gave you a pledge of safety here to-night."

"That is an oath I hope to see you forget, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"It is an oath that I shall keep under all circumstances, Monsieur Morgan, and I should be glad if you would give me the opportunity to keep it as soon as possible."

"In what way, monsieur?"

"Well, for example, by accepting a meeting with me in the Bois de Boulogne or at Vincennes. We need not say that we fight because you or your friends assassinated Sir John Tanlay. We can say that the duel was on account" (Roland thought a moment) — "on account of that eclipse of the moon which takes place on the 12th of next month. Will that suit you?"

"Any pretext would suit me, monsieur," replied Morgan, in a tone of sadness of which he might have seemed incapable, "if the duel itself could take place. You have taken an oath, you say, and mean to keep it. Well, every initiate who enters The Company of Jehu is compelled to swear that he will not expose in any personal quarrel a life which belongs to the Cause, and not to himself."

"Oh, I see; you assassinate, but you do not fight."

"You are mistaken; we fight sometimes."

"Have the goodness to point out to me an occasion when I may study that phenomenon."

"Easily enough. If you and five or six men as resolute as yourself will take your places in some diligence which carries the government money, and will defend it against our attack, the occasion you seek will come to you; but, believe me, do better than that, — do not come in our way."

"Is that a threat, monsieur?" said the young man, raising his head.

"No, monsieur," said Morgan, in a gentle, almost supplicating voice, "it is an entreaty."

"Is it addressed particularly to me, or does it include others?"

"I make it to you particularly."

And the Companion of Jehu laid a strong emphasis on the last word.

"Ah, ha!" cried the young man, "then I have the honor to interest you?"

"As a brother," replied Morgan, in the same soft, caressing voice.

"Well, well!" said Roland, "this is evidently a wager."

At this moment Bourrienne entered.

"Roland," he said, "the First Consul wants you."

"Give me time to conduct monsieur to the door, and I'll be with him."

"Make haste; you know he does not like to wait."

"Have the goodness to follow me, monsieur," said Roland, to his mysterious companion.

And Roland, taking the same path by which he had brought Morgan in, took him back, not to the door opening on the garden (for the garden was now locked up), but to that on the street. When they reached it, he stopped.

"Monsieur," he said to Morgan, "I gave you my word of honor for a safe-conduct; I have kept it faithfully; but, in order that there may be no misunderstanding between us, have the goodness to tell me that you fully understand it to have been for this day only."

"That is how I understand it, monsieur."

"You give me back my word?"

"I should like to keep it, monsieur, but I recognize that you are free to take it back."

"That is all I wish to know. Au revoir, Monsieur Morgan."

"Permit me not to offer you the same wish, Monsieur de Montrevel."

The two young men bowed to each other with perfect courtesy. Roland re-entered the Luxembourg, and Morgan, following the line of shadow projected by the walls, took one of the little streets which lead to the place Saint-Sulpice.

It is he whom we are now to follow.

XXVI.

THE BALL OF THE VICTIMS.

After taking about a hundred steps Morgan removed his mask; he ran more risk of being noticed as a masked man than of being recognized unmasked.

When he reached the rue Taranne he knocked at the door of a small lodging-house which made the corner of that street and the rue du Dragon, entered, took a candlestick from a table and a key numbered 20, and went upstairs without exciting other attention than a well-known lodger would when returning home. The clock was striking as he closed the door of his room. He listened attentively to the strokes, the light of his candle not reaching as far as the chimney-piece on which the clock was placed. He counted ten.

"Good!" he said to himself; "I shall not be late."

In spite of this probability, Morgan seemed desirous of not losing time. He passed a bit of tinder paper under a heater on the hearth; it caught fire instantly, and with it he lit four wax-candles, all there were in the room,— placing two on the fireplace and two on a bureau opposite; then he opened a drawer of the bureau and took out and spread upon the bed a complete dress of the Incroyable of the period in the last fashion. It comprised a short coat cut square across the body in front with long tails behind, of a soft shade of color between a pearl-grey and a pale-green, a waistcoat of buff plush with eighteen mother-of-pearl buttons, an immense white cravat of the finest cambric, tight trousers of white cassimere decorated with a knot of ribbons where they buttoned above the calves, silk stockings pearl-

grey in color, but striped transversely with the same pale-green as the coat, and very delicate pumps with diamond buckles. The inevitable eye-glass was not omitted. As for the hat, it was precisely like that in which Carle Vernet painted his dandy of the Directory.

When these things were ready Morgan seemed to grow impatient. At the end of five minutes he rang the bell. A waiter came.

"Where is the wig-maker?" asked Morgan. "Hasn't he come yet?"

In those days wig-makers were not yet called hair-dressers.

"Yes, citizen," answered the waiter, "he came; but you had not come in, so he went away saying he'd be back. There's the bell now; probably —"

"Here I am!" said a voice at the door.

"Ah, bravo!" cried Morgan. "Come in, master Cadenette; you must make a sort of Adonis of me."

"That will not be difficult, Monsieur le comte," replied the wig-maker.

"Look here, look here! do you mean to compromise me, citizen Cadenette?"

"Monsieur le comte, I do entreat you, call me Cadenette only, that will honor me as a proof of familiarity; but don't call me citizen — fy! that's a revolutionary denomination. In the very worst of the Terror I always called my wife *Madame* Cadenette. Now excuse me for having kept you waiting; but to-night there's a great ball in the rue du Bac, the ball of the Victims (the wig-maker emphasized the last word). I should have thought that M. le comte would be there."

"Ah, ça!" said Morgan, laughing, "so you are still a royalist, Cadenette?"

The wig-maker laid his hand tragically on his heart.

"Monsieur le comte," he said, "it is not only a matter of conscience with me, but a matter of State interest."

"Conscience, I can understand that, Cadenette; but State

interest! — what the devil has the honorable guild of wig-makers to do with politics?"

"Monsieur le comte!" exclaimed Cadenette, all the while getting ready to dress his client's hair, "you, to ask me that! you, an aristocrat!"

"Hush, Cadenette."

"Monsieur le comte, we *ci-devants* can say that to each other."

"Ho! so you are a *ci-devant*, are you?"

"To the core. In what style am I to dress M. le comte's hair?"

"Dogs' ears, and tied up behind."

"With a touch of powder?"

"Two, if you like."

"Ah, monsieur; just to think that for five years I was the only man who had an atom of powder *à la maréchale!* Why, to own a box of it was enough to get you guillotined."

"I have known men guillotined for less than that, Cadenette. But explain to me how it is that you are a *ci-devant*. I like to understand everything."

"It is very simple, monsieur le comte. You admit, don't you, that among the guilds there were some that were more or less aristocratic?"

"No doubt some were nearer to the higher classes of society."

"That 's it, monsieur le comte. Well, the highest classes of society, *we* held them by the hair of their head. I, such as you see me, I have dressed the hair of Madame de Polignac; my father dressed that of Madame du Barry; my grandfather that of Madame de Pompadour; we had our privileges, monsieur; we carried swords. It is true that to avoid accidents, such as might happen among hot-heads like us, our swords were usually of wood; but, at any rate, if they were not the actual thing they were a good imitation of it. Yes, monsieur le comte," continued Cadenette, with a sigh, "those days, ah! they were the good days, not for wig-makers only, but for France. We were in all the secrets,

all the intrigues; nothing was hidden from us; and there is no instance known, monsieur le comte, of a wig-maker betraying a secret. Look at our poor queen — to whom did she trust her diamonds? To the great, the illustrious Léonard, the prince of wig-makers. I tell you, Monsieur le comte, that two men alone overthrew the scaffolding of a power which rested on the wigs of Louis XIV., on the puffs of the Regency, the frizettes of Louis XV., and the cushions of Marie Antoinette."

"And those two men, those levellers, those revolutionaries, who were they, Cadenette? — that I may doom them, when I get into power, to universal execration."

"Monsieur Rousseau and citizen Talma: Monsieur Rousseau, who said that absurdity, 'We must return to nature;' and citizen Talma, who invented the Titus style of hair-dressing."

"That's true, Cadenette, that's very true."

"When the Directory came in there was a moment's hope. Monsieur Barras never gave up powder, and citizen Moulins did keep to his queue; but now, you see, the 18th Brumaire has knocked it all over; how could any one friz Bonaparte's lank hair, I'd like to know! Ah! there," continued Cadenette, puffing out the dogs' ears of his client, "there's hair for you! — aristocratic hair, soft and fine as silk, which takes the tongs so well that one would really think you wore a wig. Look at yourself, M. le comte; you said I was to make you an Adonis. Ah! if Venus had seen you so, it is not of Adonis that Mars would have been jealous!"

And Cadenette, now at the end of his labors and satisfied with their result, presented a hand-mirror to Morgan, who examined himself complacently.

"Well done!" he said to the wig-maker. "My dear fellow, you really are an artist. Recollect that style, and if they ever cut my head off, I shall choose to have it dressed like that,— for there will probably be women at my execution."

"And M. le comte wants them to regret him?" said the wig-maker, seriously.

"Yes; and meantime, my dear Cadenette, here is a crown to reward your labors. Have the goodness to tell them below to call a carriage for me."

Cadenette sighed.

"Monsieur le comte," he said, "time was when I should have answered, 'Show yourself at court, that is pay enough for me;' but alas! there is now no court, and a man must live. I will order the carriage."

Whereupon, Cadenette sighed again, put Morgan's crown into his pocket, made the reverential bow of wig-makers and dancing-masters, and left the young man to complete his toilet.

The head being now dressed, the rest was soon done; the cravat alone took time, owing to the many failures that occurred; but Morgan finally concluded that difficult task with an experienced hand, and as eleven o'clock was striking he was ready to start. Cadenette had not forgotten his message, a hackney-coach was at the door; Morgan jumped into it, calling out to the driver: —

"Rue du Bac, No. 60."

The coach turned into the rue de Grenelle, went up the rue du Bac, and stopped at No. 60.

"Here's a double fare, my friend," said Morgan, "on condition that you do not stand before the door."

The driver took the three francs and drove away round the corner of the rue de Varennes. Morgan looked up at the front of the house; it seemed as though he must be mistaken, so dark and silent was it; but Morgan did not hesitate; he rapped in a peculiar manner.

The door opened. At the farther end of the courtyard was a building brilliantly lighted. The young man went toward it, and as he approached, the sound of instruments reached his ear. He went up one flight and entered the dressing-room. There he gave his cloak to the usher whose business it was to take the wraps.

"Here is your number," said the usher; "your weapons must be deposited in the gallery, where you can find them again easily."

Morgan put the number into his pocket and entered a great gallery transformed into an arsenal. It contained a perfect collection of arms of all kinds: pistols, muskets, carbines, swords, daggers. As the ball might, at any moment be invaded by the police, it was necessary that every gentleman should have his weapons at hand. Laying his aside where he could easily find them, Morgan entered the ball-room.

We doubt if any pen could give the reader an adequate idea of the scene of that ball. Originally, as the name indicated, no one was admitted except by the strange right of having relatives who had either been sent to the scaffold by the Convention and the Commune, or blown to pieces by Collot d'Herbois, or drowned by Carrier. As, however, the number guillotined during the three years' Terror, had far outnumbered the other victims, the dresses of the majority of those now present were the clothes of the victims of the scaffold. Nearly all the young girls whose mothers and elder sisters had fallen by the hand of the executioner, wore the same dress their mothers and their sisters had worn for the last lugubrious ceremony, — that is, a white gown, a red shawl, with their hair cut short at the nape of their necks. Some added to this costume, already characteristic, a detail that was even more significant: they knotted about their necks a thread of scarlet silk, fine as the blade of a razor, which (as in Faust's Margaret at the witches' sabbath) indicated the cut of the knife between the throat and the collar-bone.

As to the men who were in the same case, they wore the collars of their coats turned down behind, those of their shirts wide open, their necks bare, their hair cut short.

But many others had now the right of entrance besides those whose relatives were Victims; some had made victims themselves; these latter were increasing. There were present men of forty and forty-five years of age, who had been trained in the boudoirs of the beautiful courtesans of the

seventeenth century, who had known Madame du Barry in the attics of Versailles, Sophie Arnoult with M. de Lauraguais, la Duthé with the Comte d'Artois, — men who had borrowed from the courtesies of vice the polish with which they covered their ferocity. They were still young and handsome; they entered a salon tossing their perfumed hair and opening their scented handkerchiefs; which was not a mere useless precaution, for if the odor of musk and verbena had not masked it they would have smelt of blood.

There were also men of twenty-five to thirty, dressed with extreme elegance, members of the association of Avengers, who seemed possessed by the mania of assassination, the lust of slaughtering, the frenzy of blood which no blood quenched, — men who, when the chance of killing came, killed all, friends or enemies; men who carried their business methods into the business of murder, giving their bloody cheques for the heads of such or such Jacobins and paying them at sight.

There were younger men, eighteen and twenty years of age, almost children, but children fed, like Achilles, on the marrow of wild beasts, like Pyrrhus, on the flesh of bears; here were the bandit-pupils of Schiller, the apprentice judges of the Sainte-Vehme, — that strange generation which follows some mighty political convulsion, like the Titans after chaos, the hydras after the Deluge, in short, like the vultures and the crows after carnage.

Here then was a spectre, an iron spectre, impassible, implacable, inflexible; men call it Retaliation. And the spectre mingled with the guests; it entered these gilded salons, it signalled with a look, a gesture, a nod, and it was followed wheresoever it led.

The Terror had affected much cynicism in clothes, a Spartan austerity in its food, the profound contempt of a barbarous people for arts and knowledge. The Thermidorian reaction, on the contrary, was elegant, opulent, adorned; it exhausted all luxuries, all pleasures, as in the days of Louis XV.; with one addition, — the luxury of vengeance, the lust of blood.

Fréron's name was given to this youth of the day; it was called the *jeunesse Fréron*, or the *jeunesse dorée*. Why Fréron? Why should he more than others receive that strange and fatal honor?

I cannot tell you; my researches (and those who know me will do me the justice to admit that when I have an end in view I do not count the cost of them), — my researches have not discovered an answer. It was a whim of fashion, and fashion is a goddess more capricious than fortune.

Our readers will hardly know to-day who Fréron was; the Fréron who was Voltaire's assailant is better known than he who was the patron of these elegant assassins. One was the father of the other. Louis Stanislas was son of Élie-Catherine; the father died of rage at finding his journal suppressed by Miromesnil, Keeper of the Seals. The other, irritated by the injustices to which his father had been subjected, eagerly embraced the revolutionary doctrines. Instead of his father's paper, the "Année Littéraire" strangled to death in 1775, he created in 1789 the "Orateur du Peuple." He was sent to the South on a special mission, and Marseille and Toulon retain to this day the memory of his cruelties. But all was forgotten when, on the 9th Thermidor, he proclaimed himself against Robespierre, and assisted in casting from the altar of the Supreme Being the colossus who, being an apostle, had made himself a god. Fréron, repudiated by the Mountain, which abandoned him to the heavy jaws of Moise Bayle; Fréron, disdainfully repulsed by the Girondins, who delivered him over to the imprecations of Isnard; Fréron (as the terrible and picturesque orator of the Var remarked), Fréron, naked, covered with the leprosy of crime, was accepted, caressed, petted by the Thermidorians. Then, from the camp of the latter he passed into that of the royalists, and, without any reason whatsoever for obtaining that fatal honor, he found himself, all of a sudden, at the head of a powerful party of youth, energy, and vengeance, standing between the passions of the day which led to everything and the impotence of the law which permitted all.

It was to the midst of this *jeunesse dorée*, this *jeunesse Fréron*, mouthing its words, slurring its *r's* and pronouncing its *g's* and *j's* like *z's*, giving its "word of honor" about everything, that Morgan now made his way.

It must be admitted that the assemblage, in spite of the clothes it wore, in spite of the memories those clothes recalled, was wildly gay. This seems incomprehensible, but it was so. Explain, if you can, that dance of death at the beginning of the fifteenth century, which, with all the fury of a modern galop led by Musard, whirled its chain through the Cemetery of the Innocents, and left amid the tombs fifty thousand of its votaries.

Morgan was evidently looking for some one.

An elegant young man who was dipping into the silver-gilt comfit-box of a charming victim, with a bleeding finger, the only part of his delicate hand that had not been washed with almond paste, tried to stop him and tell him the particulars of the expedition from which he had brought back this bloody trophy; but Morgan smiled, pressed the other gloved hand, and contented himself with replying, —

"I am looking for some one."

"Important?"

"Company of Jehu."

The young man with the bloody finger let him pass.

An adorable Fury (as Corneille would have called her) whose hair was held up by a dagger with a point as sharp as a needle, barred his way, saying: —

"Morgan, you are the handsomest, the bravest, the most deserving of love, of all the men present. What have you to say to the woman who tells you that?"

"I answer that I love already," said Morgan, "and that my heart is too narrow to hold one hatred and two loves;" and he continued his search.

Two young men who were engaged in a discussion, one saying, "He was English," the other, "He was German," caught at Morgan and stopped him.

"Here is the man," said one, "who can settle it for us."

"No," said Morgan, trying to pass them, "I'm in a hurry."

"There is only a word to say," persisted the other. "We have made a bet, Saint-Amand and I, that the man who was tried and executed in the Chartreuse of Seillon was, he says a German, I say an Englishman; which was he?"

"I don't know," replied Morgan; "I was not there. Ask Hector; he presided that night."

"Tell us where Hector is?"

"Tell me where Tiffauges is; I am looking for him."

"Over there, at the end of the room," said the young man, pointing to a part of the hall where the dance was more than usually gay and animated. "You will recognize him by his waistcoat; and his trousers are not to be despised. I shall have a pair made like them with the skin of the first hound I encounter."

Morgan did not waste time in asking in what way Tiffauges's waistcoat was remarkable, and by what queer cut or precious material his trousers had won the approbation of a man as expert in such matters as he who had spoken to him. He went straight to the point indicated, saw the person of whom he was in search, dancing an *été*, which seemed by the intricacy of its weaving (if we may use so technical a term) to have issued from the salons of Vestris himself.

Morgan made a sign to the dancer, who instantly stopped, bowed to his partner, led her to her seat, excused himself for leaving her, and then returned to take Morgan's arm.

"Have you seen him?" he said to Morgan.

"I have just left him."

"You delivered the king's letter?"

"To himself."

"Did he read it?"

"At once."

"Has he sent an answer?"

"Two, — one verbal, one written; the second dispenses with the first."

"You have it?"

"Here it is."

"Do you know the contents?"

"Yes; a refusal."

"Positive?"

"Nothing could be more positive."

"Does he know that the moment he takes all hope away from us we shall treat him as an enemy."

"I told him so."

"What did he answer?"

"He did not answer; he shrugged his shoulders."

"What do you think his intentions are?"

"Not difficult to imagine."

"Does he mean to keep the power himself?"

"It looks like it."

"The power, but not the throne?"

"Why not the throne?"

"He dares not make himself king."

"I cannot say if he means to be absolutely king, but I do declare that he means to make himself something of the kind."

"He is nothing but a soldier of fortune."

"My dear fellow, better in these days to be the son of his own deeds than the grandson of a king."

The young man was thoughtful.

"I shall report all that to Cadoudal," he said.

"And add that the First Consul said these very words: 'I hold La Vendée in the hollow of my hand, and if I choose, in three months they will lay down their arms.'"

"It is a good thing to know it."

"You know it; let Cadoudal know it, and take measures."

At that instant the music suddenly ceased; the hum of the dancers died away; total silence prevailed; and then, in the midst of that silence, four names were pronounced in a sonorous, accentuating voice.

These four names were, Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas.

"Excuse me," said Morgan to Tiffauges, "they are prob-

ably arranging some expedition for which I am wanted; I am forced therefore, to my great regret, to bid you good-bye. Only, before we part, let me look a little nearer at your waistcoat and trousers, of which I have heard, — curiosity of an amateur, you know; pray excuse it."

"Why, of course," said the young Vendéan, "most willingly."

XXVII.

THE BEAR'S SKIN.

With a rapidity and good-nature that did honor to his politeness, he went close to the candelabra that were standing on the chimney-piece. The waistcoat and trousers appeared to be of the same stuff; but what was that stuff? The most experienced connoisseur in materials would have been puzzled.

The trousers were tight-fitting as usual, of a light tint, something between a buff and a flesh-color; the only remarkable thing about them was the absence of seam, and the closeness with which they clung to the leg. The waistcoat, on the other hand, had two characteristic signs which attracted attention: it had been pierced by three balls and the holes were left gaping, and these were colored carmine, so like blood that some might think the stains were blood. On the left side was painted a bloody heart, the distinguishing sign of a Vendéan. Morgan examined the two articles with the closest attention, but apparently without satisfying himself.

"If I were not in such a hurry," he said, "I should like to look into the matter for myself; but, you see how it is; in all probability some news has reached the committee, — government money, no doubt. You can announce it to Cadoudal; only, we have to go and take it first. I usually command these expeditions. If I delay now some one may take my place. But before I go, do tell me what your waistcoat and trousers are made of."

"My dear Morgan," said the Vendéan, "you have perhaps heard that my brother was taken in the environs of Bressuire and shot by the Blues?"

"Yes, I knew that."

"The Blues were retreating; they left the body at the corner of a hedge. We were pursuing them closely, and got to that point directly after them; I found the body of my brother still warm. In one of his wounds a bit of stick was stuck, bearing these words: 'Shot as a brigand, by me, Claude Flageolet, corporal of the 3d battalion of Paris.' I took up my brother's body; I had the skin of the breast taken off; I vowed that skin, pierced with three holes, should eternally cry vengeance before my eyes; I made it my battle waistcoat."

"Ah!" exclaimed Morgan, with a certain astonishment, in which, for the first time, something that resembled terror mingled, "that waistcoat is made of your brother's skin? And the trousers?"

"Oh!" said the Vendéan, "the trousers, that's another matter. They are made of the skin of the legs of citizen Claude Flageolet, corporal of the 3d battalion of Paris."

At this instant the same sonorous voice called out for the second time, in the same order, the names of Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas.

Morgan sprang forward, crossed the dancing-hall from end to end, and made his way to a little salon on the opposite side to the dressing-room. His three associates, Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas were there already. With them was a young man wearing the government livery of a bearer of despatches, namely, green and gold; he also wore dusty boots and a visored cap, and carried a despatch-box, — the essential accoutrements of a cabinet courier.

One of Cassini's maps, on which could be followed the whole lay of its land, was spread out upon a table.

Before saying why this courier was there, and with what object the map was unrolled, let us cast a glance at the three new personages whose names had echoed through the ball-room, for they are destined to play an important part in the rest of this history.

The reader already knows Morgan, the Achilles and the

Paris of this strange association, — Morgan, with his blue eyes, his black hair, his tall, well-built figure, his graceful, animated, and easy bearing, his eye, which was never without an eager look, his mouth, with lips so fresh and teeth so white, that was never without a smile; the man whose countenance and expression were so remarkable, composed as they were of mingling elements that seemed foreign to each other, — strength and tenderness, gentleness and energy, combined with a bewildering gayety that was at times alarming when the thought occurred that this man was rubbing shoulders perpetually with death, and the most horrifying of deaths — upon the scaffold.

As for d'Assas, he was a man from thirty-six to thirty-eight years of age, with bushy hair that was turning gray, though his eyebrows and moustache were black as ebony. His eyes were of that wonderful shade of Indian eyes, bordering on maroon. He was formerly a captain of dragoons, admirably formed for struggle, whether physical or moral, the muscles indicating strength, the face resolution. For the rest, a noble bearing, great elegance of manner, the habits of a dandy, carrying, either from caprice or luxury, a bottle of English smelling-salts, or a silver-gilt vinaigrette containing the most subtle or the most pungent perfumes.

Montbar and Adler, whose real names were unknown, like those of d'Assas and Morgan, were commonly called in the Company "the inseparables." Imagine Damon and Pythias, Euryalus and Nisus, Orestes and Pylades at twenty-two years of age; one joyous, loquacious, noisy, the other sad, silent, dreamy; sharing all things, dangers, money, mistresses; one the complement of the other; each rushing to all extremes, but forgetting self when in danger to help the other, like the Spartan youths of the sacred legions; imagine a modern realization of all that and you will have an idea of Montbar and Adler.

It is needless to add that all three were members of The Company of Jehu. They were now convoked, as Morgan had supposed, on business of the fraternity

On entering the room Morgan went up to the pretended bearer of despatches and shook hands with him.

"Ah, the dear friend!" said the latter, with a stiff movement, proving that the best rider in the world cannot do a hundred and fifty miles at top speed on post-horses with impunity. "You are taking it easy, you Parisians; Hannibal at Capua slept on rushes in comparison with all of you. I only gave a glance into the ball-room, as became a poor cabinet courier bearing despatches from General Masséna to the First Consul, but it seemed to me that you have a fine lot of victims present. However, my dear friends, you must bid adieu to them for a time; disagreeable, unlucky, exasperating, no doubt, but the House of Jehu before all!"

"My dear Hastier —" began Morgan.

"No, no!" exclaimed Hastier. "No proper names, if you please, gentlemen. The Hastier family is an honest race in Lyon, doing business, as they call it, on the place des Terreaux, from father to son, and they would be much humiliated to learn that a scion of their stock was a cabinet courier and rode the highways with a despatch-box on his back. Lecoq, as much as you please, but Hastier, no! I don't know any Hastier; do you, gentlemen?" he continued, addressing Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas.

"No," they answered; "and we beg pardon for Morgan, who did wrong."

"My dear Lecoq —" said Morgan.

"That's all right," interrupted Hastier. "I answer to that name. Well, what do you want to say?"

"I want to say that if you are not the antipodes of the god Harpocrates, whom the Egyptians represent with a finger on his lips, you will, instead of indulging in a lot of flowery declamations, tell us why that map, and why that despatch-box."

"The deuce! if you don't know why already it is your own fault, not mine. I called you three times, caught as you doubtless were in the toils of some beautiful Eumenides imploring vengeance of a fine young man for the death of

her parents; otherwise you would know as much as these gentlemen do, and I should n't be forced to sing an encore. Well, here 's what it is: simply the remaining treasure of the Berne bears, which General Lecourbe is sending to the First Consul by order of General Masséna. A trifle, only a hundred thousand francs, but they are afraid to send it over the Jura on account of the armed forces of M. Teyssonnet, who are, they think, likely to get hold of it; so it will be sent by Geneva, Bourg, Mâcon, Dijon, and Troyes; a much safer way — as they will discover when they try it!"

"Good!"

"We have been informed of this by Renard, who started at full speed for Gex and transmitted the news to l'Hirondelle, stationed for the time being at Châlon-sur-Saône, who in turn transmitted it at Auxerre to me, Lecoq, who have just done one hundred and thirty-five miles to bring it here to you. As for the secondary details, here they are. The treasure left Berne last octodi, 28th Nivôse, year VIII. of the Republic triple and indivisible. It ought to arrive at Geneva to-day, duodi, and leave to-morrow, tridi, in the diligence from Geneva to Bourg; so that by leaving here to-night you will be able day after to-morrow, my dear sons of Israel, to meet the treasure of the Messrs. Bears somewhere between Dijon and Troyes, probably near Bar-sur-Seine or Châtillon. What say you?"

"Say!" exclaimed Morgan, "I don't think there is any saying about it; we should never permit ourselves to touch the money of their Highnesses the bears of Berne if it were still in their possession; but as it has changed hands once, I see no objection to its making a second change. Only, how are we to get off from here?"

"Have n't you the post-chaise?"

"True; it is here in the coach-house."

"And have n't you horses to take you the first stage?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose you have each a passport?"

"We have each four."

"Well, then?"

"Yes, I know; but how are we to stop a diligence in a post-chaise? We don't take our ease in that way."

"Why not?" said Montbar; "it would be original. I can't see why, if sailors board a vessel from another vessel, we could n't board a diligence from a post-chaise; novelty is everything; shall we try it, Adler?"

"I am willing," was the reply, "but how about the postilion?"

"That 's true," said Montbar.

"The difficulty is foreseen, my sons," said the courier; "a messenger has been sent to Troyes. You are to leave the post-chaise at Delbauces, and there you will find four saddle-horses stuffed with oats; you will then calculate your time, and the day after to-morrow — or rather, to-morrow, for it is now past midnight — to-morrow, between seven and eight in the morning, the money of Messrs. Bruin will have an anxious ten-minutes."

"Shall we change our clothes?" asked d'Assas.

"Why?" asked Morgan. "I think we are very presentable as we are; no diligence could ever be relieved of unnecessary weight by a more elegantly dressed set of fellows. Let us take a good look at that map, transfer from the supper-room to the pockets of the carriage a pâté, a cold chicken, and a dozen of champagne, arm to the teeth in the arsenal, get our cloaks and — clack! postilion!"

"Yes," said Montbar, "that 's good advice — the food."

"I should think so," continued Morgan; "we can kill the horses if necessary, and be back here at seven in the evening, in time to show ourselves at the Opera."

"And establish an alibi," remarked d'Assas.

"Precisely," said Morgan, with his imperturbable gayety. "How could men who applaud Mademoiselle Clotilde and Vestris at eight o'clock in the evening have been at Bar and Châtillon in the morning settling accounts with the conductor of a diligence? Come, let us look at the map, and choose our locality."

The four young men put their heads together over the map.

"If I may give a bit of topographical advice," said the courier, "it would be to put yourselves in ambush just beyond Massu; there 's a ford opposite to the Riceys — see, there!"

And the young man pointed to the place on the map.

"I should return by Chaource, there; from Chaource you have a department road straight as an arrow, which will take you to Troyes; at Troyes you take the carriage again and follow the road to Sens instead of that to Coulommiers. The donkeys (there are plenty in the provinces) who saw you in the morning won't see you on your return; you will get to the Opera at ten o'clock instead of eight — more fashionable hour — neither seen nor recognized, I 'll warrant you."

"Adopted, so far as I 'm concerned," said Morgan.

"Adopted!" repeated the other three, in chorus.

Morgan pulled out one of the two watches the chains of which were swinging from his belt; it was a masterpiece of Petitot's enamel, and on the outer case which protected the painting was a monogram in diamonds. The pedigree of this beautiful trinket was as well established as that of an Arab horse; it had been made for Marie Antoinette, who had given it to the Duchesse de Polastron, who in turn had given it to Morgan's mother.

"One o'clock," said Morgan. "Come, gentlemen, we ought to be changing horses three hours hence at Lagny."

From that moment the expedition had begun, and Morgan showed himself its leader; he no longer consulted others; he issued his commands.

D'Assas, who in Morgan's absence commanded, was the first to obey on his return.

Half an hour later a carriage containing the four young men wrapped in their cloaks was stopped at the barrier to Fontainebleau by the post-guard, who demanded passports.

"Ah, what a joke!" said one of them, putting his head out of the door and affecting the pronunciation of the day: "passports to dwive to Gwobois and call on citizen Ba-as! You are cwazy, fwend! Go on, dwiver."

The coachman whipped his horses, and the carriage passed through without further opposition.

END OF VOL. I.

THE COMPANY OF JEHU.

VOLUME II.

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THE COMPANY OF JEHU.

I.

THE ABBÉ BERNIER.

Let us leave our four companions on their way to Lagny, — where, thanks to the passports, which they owed to certain clerks in citizen Fouché's employ, they exchanged their own horses for post-horses and their coachman for a postilion, — and see why the First Consul had sent for Roland.

After parting with Morgan the young man hastened to the general's apartment. He found him standing in deep thought before the fire. At the sound of his entrance Bonaparte raised his head.

"What were you talking about, you two?" asked Bonaparte, without preamble, trusting to Roland's habit of answering to his thought.

"Well," said Roland, "we paid each other all sorts of compliments, and parted the best friends in the world."

"What did you think of him?"

"I think he is a man who is perfectly well-bred."

"How old do you take him to be?"

"My age, — not older."

"So I think; his voice is young. Ah, ça! can I be mistaken? Is there a new royalist generation growing up?"

"No, general," replied Roland, shrugging his shoulders, "it is only the remains of the old one."

"Nevertheless I must build up a new one, devoted to my son — if I ever have one."

Roland made a gesture which might be translated into the words, "I don't object." Then he said with a laugh, "There 's my little brother, to begin with."

"How old is he?"

"Between eleven and twelve."

"Why did you never tell me about him?"

"Because I thought that the sayings and doings of a monkey of his age could not interest you."

"You are mistaken, Roland; I am interested in all that concerns my friends; you ought to have asked me for something for your brother."

"Asked what, general?"

"His admission into some college in Paris."

"Pooh! you have enough persons begging favors already; I don't choose to swell the number."

"He is to come to Paris and enter a college, do you hear me? As soon as he is old enough, I will put him in the École Militaire — or some other school which I shall have founded before then."

"It is odd, general," said Roland, "but, just as if I had guessed you were going to say that, he is this very day on the point of starting for Paris."

"What for?"

"I wrote to my mother a few days ago, asking her to bring the boy to Paris. I meant to have put him in a school without saying anything to you; and when he was old enough, I should have asked you, in case —"

"In case of what?"

"Oh, in case I was not previously killed; and to provide against that I have left a bit of a will addressed to you, and recommending to your kindness my mother and the boy and the girl, — in short, the whole legion."

"The girl! — who is she?"

"My sister."

"What! you have a sister"?

"Yes."

"How old is she?"

"Seventeen."

"Pretty?"

"Charming."

"I'll take charge of her establishment."

Roland began to laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded the First Consul.

"I'm thinking, general, of a placard I'll put over the grand entrance to the Luxembourg."

"Placard of what?"

"'Marriages done here.'"

"Why not? Is there any reason for your sister remaining an old maid? I hate old maids."

"I did not say, general, that my sister was to be an old maid."

"Then what do you mean?"

"I only mean that, as the matter concerns my sister, she must, if you will allow it, be consulted."

"Ha, ha! some provincial love-affair, is there?"

"I can't say whether there is or not. I left my poor Amélie gay and blooming; I find her pale and sad. I shall get the whole truth out of her, and if you wish me to speak to you of the matter again I will do so."

"Yes, — when you get back from La Vendée."

"La Vendée! — am I going to La Vendée?"

"You are."

"When?"

"Oh, you need not hurry; provided you start to-morrow morning."

"Very good; sooner if you wish. Te'l me what I am to do there."

"Something of the utmost importance, Roland."

"The devil! it is n't a diplomatic mission, I presume?"

"Yes; it is a diplomatic mission for which I want an agent who is not a diplomatist."

"Oh, general, then I'm your man. Only, you under-

stand, the less I am a diplomatist, the more precise my instructions must be."

"I am going to give them to you. Do you see that map?"

And he showed his aide-de-camp a large map of Piedmont stretched out on the floor under a lamp suspended from the ceiling.

"Yes, I see it," replied Roland, accustomed to follow his general along the erratic and unexpected darts of his genius, "but that 's a map of Piedmont."

"Yes, it is a map of Piedmont."

"So there is still a question of Italy?"

"There is always a question of Italy."

"I thought you said La Vendée?"

"Secondarily, La Vendée."

"Look here, general, you are not going to send me to La Vendée and go yourself to Italy, are you?"

"No; don't worry."

"All right; but I warn you, if you did that I should desert and join you."

"I would forgive you; but now, let us go back to Mélas."

"Excuse me, general, but this is the first mention you have made of him."

"Yes, but I have been thinking of him a long time. Do you know where I shall defeat him?"

"By Jove! I know."

"Where?"

"Wherever you meet him."

Bonaparte laughed.

"Ninny!" he said with loving familiarity. Then, leaning over the map, he added, "Come here, Roland." Roland stooped beside him. "There," said Bonaparte, "that is where I shall fight him."

"Close to Alessandria?"

"Within six or eight miles of it. He has all his supplies, hospitals, artillery, and his reserves in Alessandria; and he will not leave the neighborhood. I shall have to strike a great blow; that 's the only condition on which I can get

peace. I shall cross the Alps," he pointed to the Great Saint-Bernard, "I shall fall upon Mélas at the very moment he least expects me, and defeat him utterly."

"Oh! that 's a sure thing!"

"Yes, but don't you understand, Roland, that in order to quit France with an easy mind, I can 't leave it with an inflammation of the bowels? — I can 't leave war in La Vendée behind me."

"Ah, now I see what you are after! You are sending me to La Vendée to suppress La Vendée."

"That young man you brought here to-night told me some serious things about La Vendée. They are brave soldiers, those Vendéans, led by a man with brains, — Georges Cadoudal. I have sent him the offer of a regiment, which he won't accept. But there 's one thing he little knows."

"Who? — Cadoudal?"

"Yes, Cadoudal. And that is that the Abbé Bernier has made me overtures."

"The Abbé Bernier?"

"Yes."

"Who is the Abbé Bernier?"

"He is the son of an Anjou peasant, who may be now about thirty-three or thirty-four years of age. Before the insurrection he was curate from Saint-Laud to Angers; he refused the oath, and took refuge among the Vendéans. Two or three times La Vendée was pacificated; twice she was thought dead. A mistake: La Vendée was pacificated, but the Abbé Bernier had not signed the peace; La Vendée was dead, but the Abbé Bernier was living. One day La Vendée was ungrateful to him. He wished to be appointed general agent to all the royalist armies of the interior; Stofflet influenced the decision and got his old master, Comte Colbert de Maulevrier, appointed in Bernier's stead. When, at two o'clock in the morning, the council separated the abbé had disappeared. What he did that night God and he alone can tell; but at five o'clock in the morning a

Republican detachment surrounded the farmhouse where Stofflet was sleeping, disarmed and defenceless. At half-past five Stofflet was captured; eight days later he was executed at Angers. The next day Autichamp took command of the royalist army, and to avoid making the same blunder as Stofflet he appointed the Abbé Bernier general agent. Now do you understand matters?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, the Abbé Bernier, general agent of the belligerent forces, and furnished with plenary powers by the Comte d'Artois, — the Abbé Bernier has made overtures to me."

"To you, to Bonaparte, First Consul, he deigns to — Why, that's a fine thing in Abbé Bernier! Have you accepted them?"

"Yes, Roland; if La Vendée will give me peace, I will open her churches and give her back her priests."

"And suppose they chant in their churches the *Domine, salvum fac regem?*"

"That would be better than not singing anything. God is all powerful, and he will decide. Does the mission please you, now that I have explained the situation?"

"Yes, thoroughly."

"Well, here's a letter for General Hédouville. He is to treat with Abbé Bernier as general-in-chief of the Army of the West; but you are to be present at all the conferences. Hédouville is to be only my voice; you are to be my thought. Now start as soon as you can; the sooner you get back, the sooner Mélas will be defeated."

"General, give me time to write to my mother; that is all I want."

"Where will she stay in Paris?"

"Hôtel des Ambassadeurs."

"When do you think she will get here?"

"Let me see; this is the night of the 21st of January, — she will be here the evening of the 23d, or the morning of the 24th."

"And she stops at the hôtel des Ambassadeurs?"

"Yes, general."

"I take it all on myself."

"Take it all on yourself, general?"

"Yes, your mother ought not to stay at a hôtel."

"Where should she stay?"

"With a friend."

"She does not know any one in Paris."

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur Roland, she knows citizen Bonaparte, First Consul, and his wife."

"You are not going to lodge my mother at the Luxembourg, general; I warn you that she would object."

"No, but I shall lodge her in the rue de la Victoire."

"Oh, general!"

"Come, come, that's settled. Go now, and get back as fast as you can."

Roland took the hand of the First Consul, meaning to kiss it; but Bonaparte drew him quickly to him.

"Kiss me, dear Roland," he said, "and good luck to you."

Two hours later Roland was rolling along in a post-chaise on the road to Orléans. The next day, at nine in the morning, he entered Nantes, after a journey of thirty-three hours.

II.

THE GENEVA DILIGENCE.

About the hour when Roland was entering Nantes, a diligence, heavily loaded, stopped at the inn of the Croix-d'Or in the middle of the main street of Châtillon-sur-Seine. In those days diligences had but two compartments, the coupé and the interior; the rotunda is an adjunct of modern invention.

The diligence had hardly stopped before the postilion jumped off his horse and opened the doors. The travellers got out. There were seven in all, of both sexes. In the interior three men, two women, and a child at the breast. In the coupé a mother and her young son. The three men in the interior were, one a doctor from Troyes, the second a watchmaker from Geneva, the third an architect from Bourg. The two women were a lady's maid travelling with her mistress, who was in the coupé, and a wet-nurse; the child was the latter's nursling, which she was taking back to its parents.

The mother and son in the coupé were persons of position, — the former about forty years of age, bearing traces of great beauty; and her son between eleven and twelve. The third place in the coupé was occupied by the conductor.

Breakfast was ready in the dining-room of the hôtel, — one of those breakfasts which conductors, in collusion no doubt with the landlords, never give travellers the time to eat. The maid followed her mistress, and the nurse got out of the coach and went to a baker's shop near by, where she bought a hot roll and a sausage, with which she went back to the coach and settled herself quietly to eat her

breakfast, — saving the cost, probably too great for her budget, of the meal at the hôtel.

The doctor, architect, watchmaker, mother and son and maid, entered the inn, and, after warming themselves hastily at the large kitchen fire, entered the dining-room and took their seats at the table. The mother contented herself with a cup of coffee with cream and some fruit; the boy, delighted to prove he was a man by his appetite at least, boldly attacked the viands. The first few moments were of course employed in satisfying hunger; after which the Swiss watchmaker was the first to break silence.

"Upon my word, citizens," he said, "I tell you frankly I was not at all sorry to see daylight this morning."

"Cannot monsieur sleep in a coach?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, I can," replied the compatriot of Jean-Jacques; "usually I sleep straight through the night, but this time anxiety was stronger than fatigue."

"Are you afraid of upsetting?" asked the architect.

"No, I 'm very lucky in that respect; it is enough for me to be in a coach to make it unupsetable; no, that 's not it."

"What is it, then?" asked the doctor.

"They say in Geneva that the highways in France are not safe."

"That 's according to circumstances," said the architect.

"How 's that?" inquired the watchmaker.

"Well," continued the architect, "for example, if the coach is carrying government money it is almost sure to be stopped."

"Do you think so?" said the watchmaker.

"Undoubtedly; I don't know how those devils of The Company of Jehu manage to be so well informed; but they seldom miss an opportunity."

The doctor nodded affirmatively.

"Ah!" exclaimed the watchmaker, addressing the doctor, "do you think so, too?"

"I do."

"And if you knew there was government money in

the coach, would you be so imprudent as to take passage by it?"

"To tell you the truth," replied the doctor, "I should think twice about it."

"And you, monsieur?" said the questioner to the architect.

"Oh, I," replied the latter, — "as I am on important business I should have started all the same."

"I have a great mind," said the watchmaker, "to take off my valise and my cases and wait for to-morrow's diligence. We have had luck so far, but there's no use tempting Providence."

"Did you not hear these gentlemen say," remarked the lady, speaking for the first time, "that we run the risk of being stopped only in case of the coach carrying government money?"

"Yes, that's exactly the trouble," replied the watchmaker, looking uneasily about him. "We are carrying it."

The lady turned slightly pale and looked at her boy. Before fearing for herself a mother fears for her son.

"What! do you mean to say we are actually carrying money belonging to the government?" said the architect and doctor, in varying tones of excitement. "Are you quite sure of what you say?"

"Perfectly sure."

"Then you ought either to have told us earlier, or to have told it now in a whisper."

"But," repeated the doctor, "perhaps monsieur is not really quite sure of what he says."

"Or monsieur may be joking," added the architect.

"God forbid!"

"The Genevese love a joke," remarked the doctor.

"Monsieur," said the Genevese, much hurt that any one could think he liked to laugh, "I saw it put upon the coach myself."

"Saw what?"

"The money."

"Was there much?"

"A good many bags."

"Where did the money come from?"

"From the treasury of the bears of Berne. You know of course that the bears of Berne had an income of fifty or even sixty thousand francs."

The doctor burst out laughing.

"You are certainly trying to frighten us," he said.

"Monsieur," said the watchmaker, "I give you my word of honor —"

"Take your places, messieurs and madame," cried the conductor, opening the door. "Quick! we are already three quarters of an hour late."

"One moment, conductor, one moment," said the architect; "we are consulting."

"About what?"

"Shut the door and come here."

"Drink a glass of wine with us, conductor."

"With pleasure, gentlemen; a glass of wine is never to be refused."

The conductor held out his glass and the three travellers touched it; but just as he was lifting it to his lips the doctor stopped his arm.

"Tell us, conductor," he said, "is it true what monsieur says?" and he pointed to the Genevese.

"Monsieur Féraud?"

"I don't know if that is his name."

"Yes, monsieur, that is my name, at your service," said the Genevese, bowing, — "Féraud and Company, No. 6 rue du Rempart, Geneva."

"Gentlemen," said the conductor, "take your places."

"But you don't answer."

"How the devil should I answer? You have not asked me anything."

"Yes, we asked you if it is true that you are carrying in your diligence a large sum of money belonging to the French government."

"Blabber!" said the conductor to the watchmaker, "you told that."

"Bless me, my good man —"

"Gentlemen," said the conductor, interrupting him, "take your places."

"But before getting in we wish to know —"

"What? — whether I have government money? Yes, I have; and now remember, if we are stopped, say and do nothing, and it will all go off well."

"You are sure?"

"Leave me to arrange matters with those gentry."

"What will you do," said the doctor to the architect, "if we are stopped?"

"Just what the conductor advises."

"That's the best thing to do," remarked the latter.

"I shall keep quiet," added the architect.

"So shall I," said the watch-maker.

"Come gentlemen, pray take your places, and let us make haste."

The boy had listened to this conversation with a frowning brow, and his teeth clenched.

"As for me," he said to his mother, "if we are stopped I know what I shall do."

"What will you do?" she asked.

"You shall see."

"What does that boy say?" ask the watchmaker.

"I say you are all cowards!" said the child, without shrinking.

"Édouard!" exclaimed his mother, "is that a proper way to speak?"

"I wish they would stop the diligence, that I do!" cried the boy, his eye sparkling with determination.

"Come, come, gentlemen, in Heaven's name take your places," called the conductor.

"Conductor," said the doctor, "I presume you have no arms?"

"On the contrary, I have my pistols."

"How unfortunate!"

The conductor stooped to the doctor's ear and whispered: —

"Don't be uneasy; they are only loaded with powder."

"Good!"

The conductor shut the door of the interior, and then, while the postilion snapped his whip and started the heavy vehicle, he also closed that of the coupé.

"Are you not coming with us, conductor?" said the mother.

"Thank you, no, Madame de Montrevel," replied the man; "I have something to do in the imperial." Then looking into the window he added: "Take care that Monsieur Édouard does not touch the pistols that are in the pocket of the carriage; he might hurt himself."

"Pooh!" said the boy, "as if I did n't know what pistols are. I have handsomer ones than yours, which my friend, Sir John Tanlay, gave me; have n't I, mamma?"

"Never mind," said Madame de Montrevel. "Édouard, I entreat you not to touch anything."

"Oh! don't be uneasy, little mother." Then he added in a low voice, "If The Company of Jehu attack us, I know what I shall do."

The diligence was now rolling heavily on its way to Paris. It was one of those fine winter days which make persons who think that Nature is dead at that season admit that Nature never dies but only sleeps. The man who lives to be seventy or eighty years of age has his nights of ten or twelve hours, and often complains that the length of his nights adds to the shortness of his days. Nature, which has an everlasting existence, trees, which live a thousand years, have sleeping periods of four or five months, which are winters for us and only nights to them. The poets, in their envious verse, sing of the immortality of Nature, which dies each autumn and re-lives each spring. The poets are mistaken; Nature does not die each autumn, she falls asleep; she is not resuscitated in spring, she awakens.

The day when our globe really dies, it will be dead indeed; and then it will roll into space or fall to the abysses of chaos, inert, mute, solitary, treeless, flowerless, without verdure, without poets.

Now on this beautiful day of the 23d of February, 1800, sleeping Nature dreamt of spring; a brilliant, almost joyous sun, made the grass of the ditches on either side the road sparkle with those deceptive pearls of the hoarfrost which vanish at a touch, and rejoice the heart of a tiller of the earth when he sees them glittering at the points of his wheat as it bravely pushes up from the soil. All the windows of the diligence were lowered, to give entrance to this earliest smile of the Divine, as though all hearts were saying: "Welcome back, traveller long lost in the clouds of the West, or beneath the heaving billows of Ocean!"

Suddenly, about an hour after leaving Châtillon, as the carriage reached a bend in the river, it stopped without apparent reason. Four horsemen had quietly approached it, walking their horses, and one of them, a little in advance of the rest, made a sign with his hand to the postilion, ordering him to pull up. The postilion had obeyed.

"Oh, mamma!" cried Édouard, standing up, and leaning out of the window in defiance of Madame de Montrevel's entreaties. "Oh, mamma, such splendid horses! But why do those gentlemen wear masks? This is n't carnival."

Madame de Montrevel had been dreaming. A woman always dreams a little: young, she dreams of the future; old, of the past. She now came out of her revery, put her head out of the window, and gave a cry. Édouard looked round hastily.

"What is the matter, mother?" he asked.

Madame de Montrevel, turning pale, took him in her arms without replying. Cries of terror were heard from the interior.

"What is it? What is it?" asked Édouard, struggling to get out of his mother's encircling arms.

"Nothing, my little man," said the gentle voice of one of the masked men, who now put his head into the coupé; "nothing, except that we have business with the conductor. Tell your mother to accept our respectful homage, and to pay no more heed to us than if we were not here." Then, passing to the door of the interior, he added: "Your servant, gentlemen; fear nothing for your money or jewels; and comfort that nurse, — we have not come here to turn her milk." Then to the conductor: "Now, then, Jérôme; we want that hundred thousand or more francs you have in the imperial and the boxes."

"Gentlemen, I assure you —

"The money belongs to the government; it did belong to the bears of Berne; seventy thousand francs are in gold, the rest in silver. The silver is on the top of the coach; the gold in the seat of the coupé, — you know that is so; we are well informed."

At the words "seat of the coupé" Madame de Montrevel gave another cry of terror; she was about to come into personal contact with men who, in spite of their politeness, inspired her with the deepest fear.

"But what 's the matter, what *is* the matter, mamma?" cried the boy, impatiently.

"Be quiet, Édouard, be quiet!"

"Why must I be quiet?"

"Don't you understand?"

"No."

"The diligence is stopped."

"Why? Do tell me why — Ah, mother, I understand!"

"No, no," said Madame de Montrevel, "you don't understand."

"Those men are robbers."

"Take care you don't say so."

"You mean they are not robbers? Why, see they are taking the conductor's money."

Sure enough; one of the four was fastening to the saddle of his horse the bags of silver which the conductor threw down from the imperial of the diligence.

"No," said Madame de Montrevel, "no, they are not robbers." Then, lowering her voice, she added: "they belong to The Company of Jehu."

"Ah!" said the boy, "it is they who murdered my friend Sir John!"

And the child turned very pale, and his breath came hissing through his closed teeth.

Just then one of the masked men opened the door of the coupé, and said with extreme politeness, —

"Madame la comtesse, to our great regret we are obliged to disturb you; but we want, or rather the conductor wants a package from the box seat of the coupé; will you be so kind as to get out for a moment? Jérôme will get what he wants quickly." Then, in a lively tone, which was never completely absent from that laughing voice, he added: "Won't you, Jérôme?"

With an instinctive movement to put herself between the danger, if there was any, and her boy, Madame de Montrevel, while complying with the request, kept Édouard behind her; that instant sufficed the boy to seize the conductor's pistols.

The young man with the laughing voice helped Madame de Montrevel to leave the coach, and then made a sign to one of his companions to give her an arm while he himself returned to the vehicle. Just then two shots were heard; Édouard had fired a pistol with each hand at the Companion of Jehu, who disappeared for an instant in a cloud of smoke.

Madame de Montrevel uttered a cry, and fainted away. Various cries, expressive of diverse sentiments, echoed that of the mother. From the interior came one of terror; they had all agreed to offer no resistance, and here was some one who had broken the agreement. From the Companions of Jehu came a cry of surprise, — it was the first time resis-

tance had been offered to them. They rushed to their companion, expecting to find him killed; but they found him safe and sound, laughing heartily, while the conductor with clasped hands was exclaiming, —

"Monsieur, I swear to you there were no balls; monsieur, I protest they were only charged with powder."

"Oh! bless you," said the young man; "don't I see that? But the intention was all the same, — was n't it, my little Édouard?" Then, turning to his companions, he added: "You must admit, gentlemen, that that's a fine boy, — a true son of his father, and brother of his brother; bravo, Édouard! you'll make a man some day!"

Taking the boy in his arms, he kissed him, in spite of his struggles, on both cheeks. Édouard fought like a demon, thinking no doubt that it was very humiliating to be kissed by a man at whom he had just fired a pistol.

During this time one of the Companions had lifted Madame de Montrevel, and laid her on the bank by the roadside a little away from the diligence. The man who had kissed Édouard with so much affection and persistence now looked round for her.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "Madame de Montrevel is still unconscious! Gentlemen, we can't leave a woman in this condition. Conductor, take Monsieur Édouard." Placing the boy in Jérôme's arms, he turned to one of his companions. "Man of precautions," he said, "have n't you smelling-salts or a bottle of essence with you?"

"Here!" said the young man he addressed, pulling from his pocket a flask of toilet vinegar.

"That's good," said the other, who seemed to be leader of the band; "do you finish up the matter with Jérôme; I'll take charge of Madame de Montrevel."

It was time something should be done for her; the fainting-fit was giving place to a violent nervous attack; spasmodic movements shook her whole body, and strangled

cries came from her throat. The young man leaned over her, and made her inhale the salts.

Presently she opened her frightened eyes, and called out: "Édouard! Édouard!" With an involuntary half-spasmodic motion she knocked aside the mask of the man who was supporting her. The face thus exposed — the laughing, handsome face — was (as our readers have already guessed) that of Morgan. Madame de Montrevel was amazed at the sight of those beautiful blue eyes, that noble brow, and the gracious lips that smiled to her. She felt that she ran no danger from such a man, and that no harm could possibly happen to Édouard. Treating Morgan as a gentleman who had succored her, and not as a bandit who had caused her illness, she said, —

"Oh, monsieur, how kind you are!"

In the words, in the tones with which she uttered them, lay a world of thanks, not for herself only, but for her child. With singular delicacy, entirely in keeping with his chivalric nature, Morgan, instead of picking up his fallen mask and covering his face immediately, so that Madame de Montrevel could only have retained a momentary and confused impression of it, — Morgan replied to her compliment by a low bow, leaving his uncovered features full time to produce their impression; then, placing his companion's flask in Madame de Montrevel's hand, — and not till then, — he replaced his mask. Madame de Montrevel understood the delicacy of the young man.

"Oh, monsieur," she said, "be sure that in whatever place and situation I see you again, I shall not recognize you."

"Then, madame," said Morgan, "it is for me to say to you how kind you are."

"Come, gentlemen; take your seats," said the conductor, in his customary tone, and as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

"Are you quite restored, madame, or should you like a few moments more to rest?" asked Morgan; "the diligence shall wait."

"No, monsieur; it is not necessary; I feel quite well, and thank you very much."

Morgan gave her his arm, and she leaned upon it to reach the diligence. The conductor had already put Édouard into it. When Madame de Montrevel had taken her place, Morgan, who had thus made his peace with the mother, attempted to make it with the son.

"Without a grudge, my young hero," he said, holding out his hand.

But the boy drew back.

"I do not give my hand to a highway robber," he said.

Madame de Montrevel gave a start of terror.

"You have a charming boy, madame," said Morgan; "only, he has prejudices." Then bowing to her with the utmost courtesy, "A prosperous journey, madame," he said, as he closed the door.

"Forward!" cried the conductor.

"Oh, your flask!" cried Madame de Montrevel.

"Keep it, madame," said Morgan; "though I hope you are so much better that you will not need it."

But Édouard, snatching it from his mother's hand, cried out, "My mother does not take presents from a thief!" and flung the bottle from the window.

"The devil!" muttered Morgan, with the first sigh his companions had ever known him to give. "I think I am right not to ask for my poor Amélie in marriage." Then turning to his comrades, he added, "Well, gentlemen, is it all successful?"

"Yes, yes," they answered, with one voice.

"Then let us mount and be off. Don't forget we have to be at the Opera before ten this evening."

Springing into his saddle, he was the first to jump the ditch, reach the river, and take the ford which the pretended bearer of despatches had pointed out to him on Cassini's map. When he reached the opposite bank, followed by the other young men, d'Assas said to him: —

"Did n't your mask come off?"

"Yes," replied Morgan; "but no one saw my face, except Madame de Montrevel."

"Hum!" muttered d'Assas; "better no one had seen it."

Putting spurs to their horses, they all four disappeared across the fields, in the direction of Chaource.

III.

CITIZEN FOUCHÉ'S REPORT.

On arriving the next day, toward eleven o'clock in the morning, at the hôtel des Ambassadeurs, Madame de Montrevel was astonished to find, instead of Roland, a total stranger awaiting her. The stranger approached her courteously.

"You are the widow of General de Montrevel, madame?" he asked.

"Yes, monsieur," replied Madame de Montrevel, not a little surprised.

"And you expected your son to meet you?"

"Yes; and I do not understand why, after the letter he wrote me —"

"Man proposes, but the First Consul disposes," answered the stranger, laughing. "The First Consul has disposed of your son for a few days and has sent me to receive you in his place."

Madame de Montrevel bowed.

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" she asked.

"To the citizen Fauvelet de Bourrienne, his chief secretary," answered the stranger.

"Please to thank the First Consul for me," returned Madame de Montrevel, "and have the kindness to express to him the profound regret I feel at not being able to thank him in person."

"But nothing could be more easy, madame."

"How so?"

"The First Consul has ordered me to bring you to the Luxembourg."

"Me?"

"You and your son."

"Oh! I 'm to see General Bonaparte! I 'm to see General Bonaparte!" cried the boy. "What happiness!"

And he jumped with joy, clapping his hands.

"Édouard, Édouard!" exclaimed his mother. Then, turning to Bourrienne, she said; "Pray excuse him; he is a little savage from the Jura mountains."

Bourrienne held out his hand to the boy.

"I am your brother's friend," he said; "will you kiss me?"

"Yes, monsieur, willingly," replied Édouard; "you are not a thief, I know."

"Édouard! — pray excuse him once more, monsieur. Our diligence was stopped on the way."

"Stopped!"

"Yes."

"By robbers?"

"Not exactly."

"Monsieur," said Édouard, "when persons take other people's money are not they robbers?"

"That is what they are generally called."

"There! you see, mamma."

"Come, Édouard, do n't talk any more, I beg of you."

Bourrienne cast an inquisitive glance on Madame de Montrevel and clearly perceived by the expression of her face that the subject was disagreeable to her; he therefore dropped it.

"Madame," he said, "may I remind you that I have orders to take you to the Luxembourg, and to add that Madame Bonaparte is expecting you?"

"Give me time, monsieur, to change my gown and dress Édouard."

"How long will that take, madame?"

"Is half an hour too long?"

"Oh, no; if half an hour really suffices I shall think you most reasonable."

"Don't be anxious, monsieur, that is all-sufficient."

"Well, madame, then I will attend to another matter, and return here in half an hour and put myself under your orders."

"Thank you, monsieur."

"Do not be annoyed if I should be punctual to the moment."

"I shall not keep you waiting."

Bourrienne left the room. Madame de Montrevel dressed Édouard first, then herself; and was ready five minutes before Bourrienne reappeared.

"Take care, madame," said Bourrienne, "lest I tell the First Consul of your extreme punctuality."

"What would happen to me if you did?"

"He would keep you near him to give lessons in the art to Madame Bonaparte."

"Oh!" said Madame de Montrevel, "impunctuality must always be forgiven to a creole."

"But are not you a creole yourself, madame? I think I have been told so."

"Madame Bonaparte," said Madame de Montrevel, laughing, "sees her husband every day, whereas I am to see the First Consul for the first time; of course I am punctual."

"Come, mother, let us go!" said Édouard.

Fifteen minutes later they had reached the Luxembourg. Bonaparte occupied the suite of rooms on the ground-floor to the right of the entrance. Josephine's chamber and boudoir were on the first floor; a stairway led from the First Consul's study to her room.

She was expecting Madame de Montrevel, and as soon as she saw her she opened her arms as to a friend. Madame de Montrevel had stopped short, respectfully, at the door.

"Oh, come, come in, madame!" said Josephine. "It is not to-day that I know you for the first time; I have long known you through your excellent son, Roland. Shall I tell you what comforts me most when Bonaparte

leaves me? It is that Roland goes with him; for I fancy that as long as Roland is there no harm will happen to my husband. Well, won't you kiss me?"

Madame de Montrevel was confused by such warmth of greeting.

"We are compatriots, you know," continued Josephine. "Oh, how well I remember Monsieur de Clémencière, and the beautiful gardens with the splendid fruit. I remember having seen a young girl there who seemed its queen. You must have married very young, madame?"

"At fourteen."

"Yes, you could not have been older to have a son the age of Monsieur Roland. But pray sit down."

She led the way, making a sign to Madame de Montrevel to sit beside her.

"And that charming boy," she continued with a look at Édouard, "is that your son, too?" and she gave a sigh. "Heaven has been prodigal to you, madame, and as you have all you can desire will you not implore it to send me a son?"

She put her lips enviously to Édouard's forehead.

"My husband will be very glad to see you, madame," continued Josephine, "he is so fond of your son. You would not have been brought to me in the first instance if Bonaparte were not engaged with the minister of police. I am afraid," she added laughing, "that you have arrived at an unfortunate moment; he is furious."

"Oh!" cried Madame de Montrevel, frightened, "if that is so, I would rather wait."

"No, no; on the contrary, the sight of you will calm him. It appears that they are stopping diligences in broad daylight on the high-roads, just as they do in the Black Forest. Fouché will find his credit in danger if this thing goes on."

Madame de Montrevel was about to answer when the door opened and an usher appeared.

"The First Consul awaits Madame de Montrevel," he said.

Madame de Montrevel rose hastily and turned to Édouard to take him with her; but Josephine stopped her.

"No," she said, "leave that beautiful boy with me. You will stay and dine with us, and Bonaparte can see him then; besides, if my husband takes a fancy to see him he can send for him. For the time being I am his second mamma. Come, my boy, what shall we do to amuse ourselves?"

"The First Consul must have lots of arms, madame?" said the boy.

"Yes, very fine ones. Come, I 'll show them to you."

Josephine went out by one door, leading the boy, and Madame de Montrevel by the other, following the usher. On her way the countess met a fair man with a pale face and haggard eye, who looked at her with an uneasiness that seemed habitual to him. She drew aside hastily to let him pass. The usher noticed her movement.

"That is the minister of police," he said in a low voice.

Madame de Montrevel watched him as he disappeared, with a certain curiosity. Fouché was by this time fatally celebrated.

The door of Bonaparte's study now opened and his head was seen through the aperture. He caught sight of the countess.

"Madame de Montrevel," he said, "come in, come in!"

Madame de Montrevel hastened her steps and entered the study.

"Come in," said Bonaparte, closing the door himself. "I have made you wait — against my will; but I had to give Fouché a scolding. You know, I hope, that I am much satisfied with Roland; I intend to make a general of him as soon as I can. When did you arrive?"

"This very moment, general."

"Where from? Roland told me, but I 've forgotten."

"From Bourg."

"What road?"

"Through Champagne."

"Through Champagne! then you must have been at Châtillon — "

"At nine o'clock, yesterday morning."

"In that case you heard about the stoppage of a diligence?"

"General — "

"Yes, a diligence was stopped at ten o'clock in the morning between Châtillon and Bar-sur-Seine."

"General, it was ours."

"Yours?"

"Yes."

"You were in the diligence that was stopped?"

"I was."

"Ah! now I shall get some exact details. Excuse me, you understand my wish for correct information; don't you? In a civilized country which has General Bonaparte for its chief magistrate, diligences can't be stopped in broad daylight on the high-roads with impunity, or — "

"General, I can't tell you anything, except that those who stopped the diligence were on horseback and masked."

"How many were there?"

"Four."

"How many men in the diligence?"

"Four, including the conductor."

"And they did n't defend themselves?"

"No, general."

"The police report that two shots were fired."

"Yes, general, but those two shots — "

"Well?"

"Were fired by my son."

"Your son? But Roland is in La Vendée."

"Roland, yes; but Édouard was with me."

"Édouard! who is Édouard?"

"Roland's brother."

"True, he spoke of him; I thought he was a child."

"He is not yet twelve, general."

"And he fired two shots?"

"Yes, general."

"Why did n't you bring him here to me?"

"He is here, general."

"Where?"

"I left him with Madame Bonaparte."

Bonaparte rang; an usher entered.

"Tell Josephine to come here and bring the boy." Then, walking up and down the study he muttered: "Four men! and a child taught them courage! Were any of the robbers wounded?"

"There were no balls in the pistols."

"What! no balls?"

"No; the pistols belonged to the conductor, and he had taken the precaution to load them with powder only."

"Very good; his name shall be known."

Just then the door opened and Madame Bonaparte came in, leading Édouard.

"Come here," said Bonaparte to the boy.

Édouard went up to him without hesitation and made a military salute.

"So it was you who fired pistols at the robbers?"

"There, mamma, you see they were robbers!" interrupted the boy.

"Of course they were robbers; I should like to hear any one declare they were not. Was it you who fired at them when the men were afraid?"

"Yes, it was I, general; but that coward of a conductor had loaded his pistols with powder only. If it had n't been for that I should have killed the leader."

"Then you were not afraid, were you?"

"I?" said the boy; "no, I 'm never afraid."

"You ought to be named Cornelia, madame," said Bonaparte, turning to Madame de Montrevel, who was leaning on Josephine's arm. Then he said to the child, kissing him: "Very good, you shall be looked after. What do you wish to be?"

"Soldier first."

"What do you mean by 'first'?"

"Yes, first; then later a colonel like my brother Roland, and a general like my father."

"It won't be my fault if you are not," said the First Consul.

"Nor mine," said the child.

"Édouard!" said his mother, alarmed.

"Don't scold him for answering properly."

Bonaparte took the child, lifted him to the level of his face and kissed him.

"You must dine with us," he said to Madame de Montrevel, "and to-night Bourrienne, who met you at the hôtel, will install you in the rue de la Victoire. You must stay there till Roland gets back; he will then find you suitable lodgings. Édouard shall go to the Prytanée, and I will attend to the marriage of your daughter."

"General!"

"That is all settled with Roland." Then turning to Josephine he added: "Take Madame de Montrevel with you and don't let her be too much bored. And, Madame de Montrevel, if *your friend*" (he emphasized the words) "wishes to go to a milliner, prevent it; she can't want bonnets, for she bought thirty-nine last month."

Giving a friendly little tap to Édouard he dismissed the two women with a wave of his hand.

IV.

THE SON OF THE MILLER AT LEGUERNO.

We mentioned that at the very moment when Morgan and his three companions stopped the Geneva diligence between Bar-sur-Seine and Châtillon, Roland was entering Nantes. If the reader would like to know the result of his mission we must not grope our way, step by step, through the darkness in which the Abbé Bernier wrapped his ambitious projects, but we must skip that part of Roland's errand and join the young emissary later at the village of Muzillac, between Ambon and Guernic, six miles above the little bay into which the Vilaine river falls.

There, we find ourselves in the heart of the Morbihan; that is to say, the region which gave birth to Chouannerie.

It was close to Laval on the little farm of the Poiriers, that the four Chouan brethren, sons of Pierre Cottereau and Jeanne Moyné were born. One of their ancestors, a morose peasant, a misanthropical wood-cutter, kept himself aloof from other peasants, as the *chat-huant* [screech-owl] keeps aloof from other birds; hence the name Chouan, a corruption of *chat-huant*. The name became that of a party. On the right bank of the Loire they said Chouans when they meant Bretons, just as on the left bank they said brigands when they meant Vendéans.

It is not for us to relate the death and destruction of that brave family, nor follow to the scaffold two sisters and a brother, nor tell of the battle-fields where René and Jean, martyrs to their faith, lay dying or dead. Since the executions of Pierre, René, and Perrine and the death of Jean, many years have now elapsed, and the martyrdom of

the sisters, the exploits of the brothers have passed into legends. We have now to do with their successors.

It is true that these "gars" are faithful to their traditions. Whether they fought beside la Rouérie, Bois-Hardy, and Bernard de Villeneuve, or with Bourmont, Frotté, and Georges Cadoudal, theirs was always the same courage, the same devotion, — that of the Christian soldier, the faithful royalist. Wherever we meet them their aspect is ever the same, rough, half-savage; their weapons are the same, muskets or simple cudgels, called in those parts "ferte;" their garments are the same, a brown woollen cap, or a broad-brimmed hat, scarcely covering the long straight hair which hung in disorderly meshes on their shoulders, the old *Aulerci Cenomani*, as in Cæsar's day, *promisso capillo;* and it might have been of these Bretons with their wide breeches that Martial said: —

> "*Tam laxa est . . .*
> *Quam veteres braccæ Britonis pauperis.*"

To protect themselves from rain and from cold they wore goatskin garments made with the long hair turned outside; on the breast of which, by way of visible countersign, some wore a scapulary and chaplet, others a heart, the heart of Jesus; this latter was the distinctive mark of a brotherhood which withdrew apart each day for common prayer.

Such were the men who, at the time of which we are speaking were spread through the Morbihan from Roche-Bernard to Vannes and from Quertemberg to Billiers, surrounding consequently the village of Muzillac. But it needed the eye of an eagle hovering in the upper air, or that of an owl piercing the darkness, to distinguish these men among the gorse and heather and underbrush where they were crouching.

Let us pass through this net-work of invisible sentinels and after fording two streams, the affluents of a nameless river which throws itself into the sea near Billiers between

Arzal and Damgan, let us boldly enter the little village of Muzillac.

All is still and sombre; a single light shines through the chinks in the shutter of a house, or rather a hut, which nothing distinguishes from the others. It is the fourth to the right on entering the village. Let us put our eye to one of these chinks and look in.

We see a man dressed like all the rich peasants of the Morbihan, except that gold lace about a finger wide is on the collar and buttonholes of his coat, also at the corners of his hat. The rest of his dress consists of leathern trousers and high-topped boots. His sabre is thrown upon a chair. A pair of pistols is within reach of his hand. Within the fireplace the barrels of three or four muskets reflect the light of a blazing fire. The man is seated before a table; a lamp throws light upon some papers which he is reading with great attention, and it also illuminates his face.

The face is that of a man of thirty. When the cares of a partisan warfare do not darken it, its expression must surely be frank and joyous; beautiful fair hair frames it; great blue eyes enliven it; the head, of a shape peculiarly Breton, seems to show, if we believe in Gall, an exaggerated development of the organs of self-will. The man has two names. That by which he is known to his soldiers, his familiar name, is "Round-head," and his real name, received from his brave and excellent parents, Georges Cadudal, or rather Cadoudal, tradition having changed the orthography of a name that is now historical.

Georges was the son of a farmer of the parish of Kerléano in the commune of Brech. The story is that this farmer was once a miller. Georges had just received at Vannes (distant only a few leagues from Brech) a good and solid education when the first appeals for a royalist insurrection were made in La Vendée. He listened to them, gathered together a number of his hunting companions, and offered his services to Stofflet. But Stofflet

demanded to see him at work before he fairly accepted him; Georges asked nothing better. Such occasions were not long to seek in the Vendéan army. Almost the very next day there was a fight; Georges went into it with such a will and made so desperate a rush that Stofflet, watching him charge the Blues, remarked aloud to Bonchamp, who was near him: —

"If a cannon-ball does n't take off that *big round head* it will roll far, I warrant you."

That is how the name was fastened on Cadoudal, — a name by which, five centuries earlier, the lords of Malestroit, Penhoël, Beaumanoir, and Rochefort designated the great Constable whose ransom was spun by the women of Brittany.

"There 's the *big round head*," they said; "now we 'll exchange good blows with the English."

At the present time, alas, it was not Bretons against English, but Frenchmen against Frenchmen. Georges remained in La Vendée until after the defeat of Savenay. The whole Vendéan army was either left upon the battle-field, or it vanished away like smoke. For three years Georges had done prodigies of valor, strength, and dexterity; he now crossed the Loire and re-entered the Morbihan with only one man left out of all who had followed him. That man was his aide-de-camp, or rather his brother-in-arms; he never left him, and in memory of the hard campaign they had made together he changed his name from Lemercier to Tiffauges. We have seen that man at the Victims' ball charged with a message to Morgan.

As soon as Cadoudal returned to his own part of the country he fomented insurrection, but this time he acted on his own responsibility. Bullets respected that big round head, and the big round head, as Stofflet predicted, succeeded La Rochejacquelein, Elbée, Bonchamps, Lescure, even Stofflet himself, and became their rival for fame and their superior in power; for it happened (and this will give an idea of his strength) that Cadoudal, almost single-

handed, had been able to resist the government of Bonaparte, now for the last three months or more First Consul. The two leaders who continued, with him, faithful to the Bourbon dynasty were Frotté and Bourmont.

At the time of which we are now speaking, that is to say, January 26, 1800, Cadoudal commanded some three or four thousand men, with whom he was preparing to blockade General Hatry in Vannes. During the time that he awaited the answer of the First Consul to the letter of Louis XVIII. he had suspended hostilities; but Tiffauges had arrived a couple of days earlier with Bonaparte's answer. That letter was already on its way to England, whence it was sent to Mittau; and because the First Consul would not accept peace on the terms dictated by Louis XVIII., Cadoudal, commander-in-chief of Louis XVIII. in the West, renewed his warfare against Bonaparte, intending to carry it on alone, if necessary, with his friend Tiffauges. At this moment the latter was at Pouancé, where conferences were being held between Châtillon, d'Autichamp, the Abbé Bernier, and General Hédouville.

He was reflecting — this last survivor of the great warriors of the Civil War, as he sat by that cottage fire; and the news he had just received was indeed a matter for deep reflection.

General Brune, the conqueror of Alkmaar and Castricum and the savior of Holland, had just been appointed commander-in-chief of the Republican army of the West, and had reached Nantes; he came to annihilate at any cost Cadoudal and his Chouans. At any cost, therefore, Cadoudal and his Chouans must prove to the commander-in-chief that they knew no fear, and that he had nothing to expect from intimidation.

Just then the gallop of a horse was heard, and the rider no doubt had the countersign, for he passed without difficulty the various patrols stationed along the road to la Roche-Bernard, and entered the village of Muzillac, also

without difficulty. Once there, he stopped before the door of the cottage in which Cadoudal was seated. The latter raised his head, listened, and laid his hands upon his pistols by way of precaution, though it was probable that the new-comer was a friend.

The horseman dismounted, entered the alley, and opened the door of the room in which Georges was sitting.

"Ah! is it you, Cœur-de-Roi?" said Cadoudal. "Where do you come from?"

"From Pouancé, general."

"What news?"

"A letter from Tiffauges."

"Give it."

Georges took the letter hastily and read it.

"Ah!" he said.

Then he reread it.

"Have you seen the person whose coming he speaks of?" asked Cadoudal.

"Yes, general," replied the messenger.

"What sort of man is he?"

"A handsome young man of twenty-six or twenty-seven."

"What manner?"

"Determined."

"That 's it; when will he get here?"

"Probably to-night."

"Did you safe-guard him along the road?"

"Yes; he 'll come safely."

"Do it again; nothing must happen to him. He is protected by Morgan."

"That 's fully understood, general."

"Anything more to say?"

"The advanced guard of the Republicans has reached Roche-Bernard."

"How many men?"

"About a thousand; they have a guillotine with them, and the commissioner of the executive power, Millière."

"Are you sure?"

"I met them on the way; the commissioner was on horseback beside the colonel, and I recognized him. He condemned my brother to death and I have sworn he shall die by my hand."

"And you 'll risk your life to keep that oath?"

"On the first occasion."

"Perhaps it won't be long in coming."

The gallop of a horse was again heard.

"Ah!" said Cœur-de-Roi, "that is probably the man you expect."

"No," said Georges; "this rider comes from the direction of Vannes."

The sound became more distinct, and it proved that Cadoudal was right. The second horseman, like the first, stopped before the door, dismounted, and came into the room. The royalist leader recognized him instantly, in spite of the large cloak which completely covered him.

"It is you, Bénédicité?" he said.

"Yes, general."

"Where are you from?"

"Vannes, where you sent me to watch the Blues."

"Well, what are the Blues doing?"

"Scaring themselves about dying of hunger if you lay siege to the town. In order to procure provisions General Hatry intends to carry off the supplies at Grandchamp to-night. The general is to command the raid in person; and to act quickly only a hundred men are to be employed."

"Are you tired, Bénédicité?"

"I 'm never tired, general."

"And your horse?"

"He came fast, but he can do ten or fifteen miles more without killing himself."

"Give him two hours' rest, a double feed of oats, and make him do twenty."

"On those conditions he can do them."

"Start in two hours; be at Grandchamp by day-break. Give an order in my name to evacuate the village; I 'll

take care of General Hatry and his column. Is that all you have to say?"

"No; there 's more news."

"What?"

"Vannes has a new bishop."

"Ha! so they are giving us back our bishops?"

"So it appears; but if they are all like this one they may keep them."

"Who is it?"

"Audrein."

"The regicide?"

"Audrein, the renegade."

"When is he coming?"

"To-night, or to-morrow."

"I shall not go to meet him; but let him beware of falling into the hands of my men!"

Bénédicité and Cœur-de-Roi burst into a laugh which completed Cadoudal's thought.

"Hush!" said the latter.

The three men listened.

"This time it is probably he," said Georges.

The tramp of a horse could be heard coming from the direction of la Roche-Bernard.

"Yes, it is certainly he," said Cœur-de-Roi.

"Then, my friends, leave me alone. You, Bénédicité, get off to Grandchamp as soon as possible; you, Cœur-de-Roi, have thirty men in the courtyard at once. I want messengers to send in different directions. By the bye, tell some one to bring me the best that can be got for supper in the village."

"For how many persons, general?"

"Oh, two."

"Are you going out?"

"No, only to the door to meet the man who is coming."

Two or three *gars* had already taken the horses of the messengers into the courtyard; the messengers themselves disappeared.

Georges reached the door on the street just as a horseman, pulling up his horse, looked about him and seemed to hesitate.

"He is here, monsieur," said Georges.

"Who is here?" asked the rider.

"He whom you seek."

"How do you know who that is?"

"I presume it is Georges Cadoudal, otherwise called Round-head."

"Exactly."

"Then I bid you welcome, Monsieur Roland de Montrevel, for I am the person you seek."

"Ah, ah!" exclaimed the young man, somewhat astonished.

Then, dismounting, he looked about him as if for some one to take his horse.

"Throw the bridle on your horse's neck, and don't be uneasy about him, you will find him when you want him. Nothing is ever lost in Brittany; you are in the land of honesty."

The young man made no observation, flung the bridle, as he had been told, over his horse's neck and followed Cadoudal, who walked before him.

"Only to show you the way, colonel," said the leader of the Chouans, courteously.

They both entered the cottage, where an invisible hand had just made up the fire.

V.

WHITE AND BLUE.

Roland entered, as we have said, behind Georges, and as he entered he cast a look of careless curiosity about him. That look sufficed to show that they were quite alone.

"Are these your headquarters, general?" asked Roland with a smile, turning the soles of his boots to the blaze.

"Yes, colonel."

"They are singularly guarded!"

Georges smiled.

"You say that because you found the road open from Roche-Bernard here."

"I did not meet a soul."

"That does not prove that the road was not guarded."

"Unless by the owls who seemed to fly from tree to tree and accompanied me all the way, general."

"Ah! exactly," replied Cadoudal; "those owls were my sentinels, sentinels with good eyes, inasmuch as they have this advantage over the eyes of men, they can see in the dark."

"It is not the less true that I was fortunate in having inquired my way at Roche-Bernard, for I did not meet even a cat who could have told me where to find you."

"But if you had raised your voice at any spot on the road and asked, 'Where shall I find Georges Cadoudal,' a voice would have answered: 'In the village of Muzillac, fourth house to the right.' You saw no one, colonel, but there were fifteen hundred men or thereabouts close by you who knew that Colonel Roland de Montrevel, aide-de-camp to the First Consul was on his way to a conference with the son of the miller of Leguerno."

"But if they knew I was a colonel in the Republican service and aide-de-camp to the First Consul, how came they to let me pass? "

"Because they were ordered to do so."

"Then you knew I was coming? "

"I not only knew you were coming, but I also know why you have come."

Roland looked at him fixedly.

"Then it is useless for me to tell you," he said; "and you will reply even though I say nothing? "

"You are pretty nearly right."

"By heavens! I would like to have the proof of this superiority of your police over ours."

"I offer you that proof, colonel."

"I shall receive it with much satisfaction, especially before this excellent fire, which also seems to have been expecting me."

"You say truer than you know, colonel; and it is not the fire only that seeks to do its best to welcome you."

"Yes; but it does not tell me, any more than you have done, the object of my mission."

"Your mission, which you do me the honor to extend to me, colonel, was originally intended for the Abbé Bernier only. Unhappily, the Abbé Bernier, in a letter which he sent to his friend, Martin Duboys, presumed a little on his strength; he offered his mediation to the First Consul."

"Pardon me," interrupted Roland, "you tell me something I did not know; namely, that the Abbé Bernier wrote to General Bonaparte."

"I said he wrote to his friend Martin Duboys, which is very different. My people intercepted his letter and brought it to me; I had it copied, and I forwarded the original, which, I am certain, reached the right hands. Your visit to General Hédouville proves it."

"You are probably aware that General Hédouville is no longer in command at Nantes. General Brune takes his place."

"You may even say that General Brune commands at la Roche-Bernard, for a thousand Republican soldiers entered that town to-night about six o'clock, bringing with them a guillotine and the commissioner-general, Thomas Millière. Having the instrument with them, it was necessary to have the executioner."

"Then you say, general, that I came to see the Abbé Bernier?"

"Yes; the Abbé Bernier had offered his mediation; but he forgot that at the present time there are two Vendées. The Vendée of the left bank and the Vendée of the right bank; and that after treating with Autichamp, Châtillon, and Suzannet at Pouancé it was necessary to negotiate with Frotté, Bourmont, and Cadoudal, — and where? That no one could tell —"

"But you, general."

"So, with the chivalry which is the basis of your nature, you undertook to come here and bring me the treaty signed on the 25th. The Abbé Bernier, d'Autichamp, Châtillon, and Suzannet signed your pass, and here you are."

"Upon my word, general, I must admit that you are perfectly well informed. The First Consul desires peace with all his heart; he knows that in you he has to do with a brave and loyal adversary, and not being able to see you, for you are not likely to come to Paris, he has sent me to talk to you on his behalf."

"You mean he sent you to see the Abbé Bernier."

"General, that can hardly matter to you, if I bind myself to make the First Consul accept whatever may be agreed upon between you and me. What are your conditions of peace?"

"Oh, very simple, colonel: that the First Consul shall restore his Majesty Louis XVIII. to the throne; that he himself be Constable, lieutenant-general, commander-in-chief by land and sea, and I his first subordinate."

"The First Consul has already replied to that demand."

"Yes, and that is why I have decided to reply myself to his response."

"When?"

"This very night, if occasion offers."

"In what way?"

"By resuming hostilities."

"But you know that Châtillon, d'Autichamp, and Suzannet have laid down their arms?"

"They are the leaders of the Vendéans, and in the name of the Vendéans they can do as they see fit. I am the leader of the Chouans, and in the name of the Chouans I shall do that which suits me."

"Then, general, do you condemn this unhappy region to a war of extermination?"

"It is a martyrdom to which I summon all Christians and royalists."

"General Brune is at Nantes with eight thousand prisoners just returned to us by the English after their defeats at Alkmaar and Castricum."

"That is the last time they will have the chance; the Blues have taught us the bad habit of not making prisoners. As for the number of our enemies, we don't care for that; that is merely a matter of detail."

"If General Brune and his eight thousand men, joined to the twenty thousand he has received from General Hédouville, are not sufficient, the First Consul has determined to march against you in person with a hundred thousand men!"

Cadoudal smiled. "We will try to prove to the First Consul," he said, "that we are worthy to fight him."

"He will burn your towns."

"We shall retire to our huts."

"He will burn your huts."

"We will live in the woods."

"Reflect, general."

"Do me the honor to stay here forty-eight hours, colonel, and you shall see that my reflections are already made."

"I am strongly inclined to accept."

"Only, colonel, don't expect more of me than I can give, — a night's sleep under a thatched roof or wrapped in your cloak beneath a tree, a horse to follow me, and a safeguard when you leave me."

"I accept."

"Have I your word, colonel, that you will not interfere with any orders I may give, and will do nothing to defeat the surprises I may attempt?"

"I am too curious to see it all; you have my word, general."

"Whatever takes place before your eyes?"

"Whatever takes place before my eyes; I renounce the rôle of actor and confine myself wholly to that of spectator. I wish to say to the First Consul, 'I have seen.'"

Cadoudal smiled.

"Well, you shall see," he said.

At that moment, the door opened and two peasants brought in a table all laid, on which was a smoking bowl of cabbage soup and a piece of lard; an enormous pot of cider, just drawn from the cask, was foaming over the edges of a jug. A few cakes of buckwheat served as a dessert to this modest repast. The table was laid for two persons.

"You see, Monsieur de Montrevel, that my gars hoped that you would do me the honor to sup with me."

"Faith! they were not far wrong. I should have asked for supper had you not invited me; and I might have been forced to seize some had you refused me."

"Then fall to."

The young colonel sat down gayly.

"Excuse the repast I offer," said Cadoudal. "I don't make prize-money, as your generals do; my soldiers feed me. Have you anything else for us, Brise-Bleu?"

"A fricasseed chicken, general."

"That 's your dinner, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"A feast! Now I have but one fear, general."

"And that is —"

"All will go well in the eating way, but when it comes to drinking — "

"Don't you like cider? The devil! I'm sorry; cider or water, that's my cellar."

"That's not it; but whose health are we to drink, you and I? "

"Is that all, monsieur?" said Cadoudal, with noble dignity. "We will drink to the health of our common mother, France; we are serving her with differing minds, but, as I hope, with the same heart. To FRANCE, monsieur! " said Cadoudal, filling the two glasses.

"To FRANCE, general!" replied Roland, clinking his glass against that of Cadoudal.

Then they both reseated themselves gayly, their consciences at rest, and attacked the soup with appetites that were not yet thirty years old.

VI.

LEX TALIONIS.

"Now, general," said Roland, when supper was over and the two young men, with their elbows on the table and their legs stretched out toward the blazing fire, began to feel that comfortable sensation that comes of a meal which youth and appetite have seasoned, — "now for your promise to show me things to report to the First Consul."

"You promised, remember, not to object to them."

"Yes; but I reserve the right, in case you wound my conscience too severely, to withdraw."

"Only give time to throw a saddle on the back of your horse, or of mine if yours is too tired, colonel, and you are free to go."

"Very good."

"As it happens," said Cadoudal, "events will serve you. I am here not only as general but as judge; though it is long since I have had a case to try. You told me, colonel, that General Brune was at Nantes; I knew it. You told me also that his advanced guard was twelve miles from here at la Roche-Bernard; I knew that too. But a thing you may not know is that this advanced guard is not commanded by a soldier like you and me, but by the citizen Thomas Millière, commissioner of the Executive authorities. Another thing of which you may perhaps be ignorant is that the citizen Thomas Millière does not fight, as we do, with cannon, muskets, bayonets, pistols, sabres, but with an instrument invented by one of your Republican philanthropists, called a guillotine."

"Impossible, monsieur," cried Roland; "it is impossible that under the First Consul any one can make that kind of war."

"Ah! let us understand each other, colonel. I don't say that the First Consul makes it; I say it is made in his name."

"And who is the scoundrel that abuses the authority given him to make war with a staff of executioners?"

"I have told you his name; he is called Thomas Millière. Question whom you please, colonel, and you 'll hear throughout La Vendée and Brittany but one voice on that man. From the day of the first uprising of the Bretons and the Vendéans, now six years ago, Millière has been, always and everywhere, the most active agent of the Terror. For him the Terror did not end with Robespierre. He denounced to his superiors or caused to be denounced to himself the Breton and Vendéan soldiers, their parents, friends, brothers, sisters, wives, even the wounded and dying; he shot them all or guillotined them all without a trial. At Daumeray, for instance, he left a trail of blood behind him which can never be effaced; more than eighty of the inhabitants were slaughtered before his eyes. Sons were killed in the arms of their mothers, who vainly stretched those bloody arms to heaven imploring vengeance. The successive pacifications of Brittany and La Vendée have never slaked the thirst for murder which burns his very entrails. He is the same in 1800 that he was in 1793. Well, that man — "

Roland looked at the general.

" — that man," continued Cadoudal, with the utmost calmness, "is to die. Seeing that society did not condemn him, I have condemned him; he is about to die."

"How, and where? at la Roche-Bernard, in the midst of the Republicans, — in spite of his body-guard of assassins and executioners?"

"His hour has struck; he is to die."

Cadoudal uttered those words with such solemnity that no doubt remained in Roland's mind, not only as to the sentence, but also the execution of it. He was thoughtful for a moment.

"And you think you have the right to judge and condemn that man, guilty as he is?"

"Yes, for that man has judged and condemned, not the guilty, but the innocent."

"If I said to you, On my return to Paris I will demand the arrest and trial of that man, would you not trust my word?"

"I would trust your word; but I should say to you: A maddened wild beast escapes from his cage, a murderer from his prison; men are men, subject to error, — they have sometimes condemned the innocent, they might spare the guilty. My justice is more certain than yours, colonel, for it is the justice of God. The man will die!"

"And by what right do you claim that your justice, the justice of a man liable to error like other men, is the justice of God?"

"Because I have made God a sharer in my judgment. My condemnation of that man is not of yesterday."

"How so?"

"In the midst of a storm, when the thunder roared without cessation and the lightning flashed from minute to minute, I raised my arms to heaven and said to God: 'O God! whose look is that lightning, whose voice is that thunder, if this man ought to die, extinguish that lightning, still that thunder for ten minutes; the silence of the skies, the darkness of the heavens shall be thy answer!' Watch in hand, I counted eleven minutes without flash or sound. I saw at the point of the promontory a boat, tossed by a terrible tempest, with one man in it, in danger every instant of sinking; a wave lifted it as the breath of an infant lifts a feather, and cast it on the rocks. The boat flew to pieces; the man clung to the rock; and all the people cried out: 'He is lost!' His father was there, his two brothers were there, but none dared succor him. I raised my arms to the Lord and said: 'If Millière is condemned by thee as by me, O God, let me save that man; with no help but thine, let me save him.' I stripped,

I knotted a rope around my arm, and I swam to the rock. The water subsided before my breast; I reached the man. His father and his brothers held the rope, he gained the shore. I could have returned as he did, fastening the rope to the rocks. I flung it away from me; I trusted in God. I cast myself back to the waves; they floated me gently to the shore, like as the waters of the Nile bore Moses' basket to Pharaoh's daughter. The enemy's outposts were stationed round the village of Saint-Nolf; I was hidden in the wood of Grandchamp with fifty men. Recommending my soul to God, I left the wood alone. 'Lord God,' I said, 'if it be thy will that Millière die, let that sentry fire upon me and miss me; then I will return to my men and leave that sentry unharmed, for thou wilt have been with him an instant.' I walked to the republican; at twenty paces he fired and missed me. Here is the hole of the ball in my hat, an inch from my head; the hand of God had aimed the weapon. That happened yesterday. I thought that Millière was at Nantes. To-night they have come to tell me that he and his guillotine are at Roche-Bernard. Then, I said: 'God has brought him to me; he shall die.'"

Roland listened with a certain respect to the superstitious narration of the Breton leader. He was not surprised to find such beliefs and such poesy in a man born in face of a savage sea and among the Druid monuments of Karnac. He saw that Millière was indeed condemned and that God, who had thrice appeared to approve his death, alone could save him. But one last question occurred to his mind.

"How will you execute him?" he asked.

"Oh!" said Cadoudal, "I do not trouble myself about that; he will be executed."

One of the men who had brought in the supper-table now entered the room.

"Brise-Bleu," said Cadoudal, "tell Cœur-de-Roi that I wish to speak to him."

Two minutes later the Breton presented himself.

"Cœur-de-Roi," said Cadoudal, "did you not tell me that the murderer Thomas Millière was at la Roche-Bernard?"

"I saw him enter the town side by side with the republican colonel, who did not seem particularly pleased with such companionship."

"Did you not say he was followed by his guillotine?"

"I told you that his guillotine followed between two cannon."

"What precautions does Millière take in the towns he visits?"

"He has a special guard about him; the streets round his house are barricaded. He carries pistols always at hand."

"And yet in spite of the guard and the pistols and the barricades, will you undertake to reach him?"

"I will undertake to do so, general."

"I have, on account of his crimes, condemned that man to death; he must die."

"Ah!" exclaimed Cœur-de-Roi, "the day of justice has come at last!"

"Do you undertake to execute my sentence, Cœur-de-Roi?"

"I undertake to do so, general."

"Go, then; take the number of men you want. Devise what stratagem you please, but reach the man and execute the judgment."

"If I die, general — "

"Fear not; the curate of Leguerno shall say enough masses in your behalf to keep your poor soul out of purgatory. But you will not die, Cœur-de-Roi."

"No matter for that, general; now that I am sure of the masses I ask nothing more. I have my plan."

"When will you start?"

"To-night."

"When will he die?"

"To-morrow."

"Go; see that three hundred men are ready to follow me in half an hour."

Cœur-de-Roi went out as simply as he had entered.

"You see," said Cadoudal, "the sort of men I command. Is your First Consul as well served as I am, Monsieur de Montrevel?"

"By some, yes."

"Well, it is not *some* with me, it is all."

Bénédicité entered the room and questioned Cadoudal with a look.

"Yes," replied Georges with voice and nod.

Bénédicité left the room.

"Did you meet any one on your way here?" asked Georges of Roland.

"No one."

"I asked for three hundred men within half an hour, and they will be here within that time. I might have asked for five hundred, a thousand, two thousand, they would have been here as promptly."

"But," said Roland, "you have, in number at least, a limit you cannot exceed."

"Do you want to know my effective? It is easily told; but I will not tell you myself, for you would not believe me; wait, I will have you told."

He opened the door, and called: —

"Branche-d'Or!"

Two seconds later Branche-d'Or appeared.

"This is my major-general," said Cadoudal, laughing. "He fulfils to me the functions General Berthier fulfils to the First Consul. Branche-d'Or."

"General."

"How many men are stationed along the road between here and Roche-Bernard, the road this gentleman has lately ridden over?"

"Six hundred on the Arzal moor, six hundred among the Marzan gorse, three hundred at Péaule, three hundred at Billiers."

"Total, eighteen hundred. How many between Noyal and Muzillac?"

"Four hundred."

"Two thousand two hundred; how many between here and Vannes?"

"Fifty at Theix, three hundred at the Trinité, six hundred between the Trinité and Muzillac."

"Three thousand two hundred,— and from Ambon to Leguerno?"

"Twelve hundred."

"Four thousand four hundred,— and in the village here, round me, in the houses, the gardens, the cellars?"

"Five to six hundred, general."

"Thank you, Branche-d'Or."

He made a sign with his head and Branche-d'Or went out.

"You see," said Cadoudal, simply, "about five thousand men. Well, with those five thousand men, all belonging to the country about here, knowing each tree, each stone, each furze bush, I can make war and hold my own against the hundred thousand men you say the First Consul threatens to send against me."

Roland smiled.

"You think that is saying too much, don't you?"

"I think you are boasting a little, general,— boasting of your men, I mean."

"No; for my auxiliaries are the whole population. None of your generals can make a single movement without my knowing it; not one of them can send a dispatch without my intercepting it, or find a retreat where I shall not pursue him; the very earth is Christian and royalist! It says to me, 'See, the Blues passed here; the slaughterers are hidden there!' At any rate, you shall judge for yourself."

"How?"

"We are going to make an expedition about twenty miles from here. What o'clock is it?"

The young men looked at their watches.

"Quarter to twelve," they said together.

"Good!" said Georges, "our watches agree; that's a good omen; perhaps some day our hearts will do the same."

"You were saying, general?"

"I was saying that it was a quarter to twelve, colonel, and that at six o'clock, before day, we must be twenty miles from here. Do you want to rest?"

"I!"

"Yes, you can sleep an hour."

"Thanks; unnecessary."

"Then we will start at once."

"But your men?"

"Oh, they are ready."

"Where?"

"Everywhere."

"I should like to see them."

"You shall see them."

"When?"

"Whenever agreeable to you. My men are very discreet; they never show themselves till I make them a signal."

"So that if I wish to see them —"

"You will tell me, I shall make a signal, and they'll appear."

"Let us start, general."

"Yes, let us start."

The young men wrapped their cloaks about them and left the room. At the doorway Roland ran into a little group of five men. The five men wore Republican uniforms; one of them had the stripes of a sergeant on his sleeve.

"What is all this?" asked Roland.

"Nothing," replied Cadoudal, laughing.

"But these men, who are they?"

"Cœur-de-Roi and his party; they are starting on that errand you know of."

"Then they expect by means of that uniform to —"

"Oh, you shall know all; colonel; I have no secrets from you." Then, turning to the little group, "Cœur-de-Roi!" he called.

The man with the stripes upon his sleeve left the group and came to Cadoudal.

"You called me, general?" he said.

"Yes, I want to know your plan."

"General, it is very simple."

"Let me judge of it."

"I put this paper in the muzzle of my gun." Cœur-de-Roi showed a large envelope with an official red seal which had once, no doubt, contained some Republican despatch intercepted by the Chouans. "I present myself to the sentries saying, 'Despatch from the general of the division.' I enter the first guard-house and I ask to be shown to the house of the citizen commissioner; they show me; I thank them — always best to be polite; I reach the house, find another sentry, tell him the same tale; I go up or I go down to the citizen Millière, according as he lives in a garret or cellar; I enter without difficulty, you understand,— 'Despatch from the general of division.' I find the citizen in his study, or anywhere else; I give him the paper, and while he opens it I stab him with this dagger, here in my sleeve."

"Yes, but what becomes of you and your men?"

"Ha, faith! God will keep us; we are defending his cause, it is for him to take care of us."

"Now you see, colonel," said Cadoudal, "how easy it all is. Come, let us mount, colonel. Good luck to you, Cœur-de-Roi."

"Which of these two horses shall I take?" asked Roland.

"Either; one is as good as the other; each has an excellent pair of English pistols in the holsters of the saddle."

"Loaded?"

"And well loaded, colonel; that's a duty I never trust to any one."

The two young men were soon in their saddles and on

the road to Vannes; Cadoudal guiding Roland, and Branche-d'Or, the major-general of the army, as Cadoudal called him, following about twenty paces in the rear. When they reached the end of the village, Roland darted his eyes along the road which lies in an almost straight line from Muzillac to the Trinité. The road, fully exposed to view, seemed absolutely solitary.

They rode on in silence for over a mile, and then Roland exclaimed: "Where the devil are your men?"

"To right and left, before us and behind us."

"Ha! what a joke!" cried Roland.

"It is not a joke, colonel; do you think I should be so rash as to risk myself thus without an escort?"

"You told me, I think, that if I wished to see your men, I had only to say so."

"I did tell you that."

"Well, I wish to see them."

"Wholly or in part?"

"How many are with you?"

"Three hundred."

"Then I wish to see a hundred and fifty."

"Halt!" cried Cadoudal.

Putting his hands to his mouth he gave the hoot of an owl, and then its cry; but he threw the hoot to the right, and the cry to the left.

Instantly, on both sides of the road, human forms were seen to move and then to bound over the ditch which separated the bushes from the road.

"Who commands on the right?" asked Cadoudal.

"I, Moustache," replied a peasant, coming near.

"Who commands on the left?" repeated the general.

"I, Chante-en-hiver," replied another peasant, also approaching him.

"How many men are with you, Moustache?"

"One hundred."

"How many men are with you, Chante-en-hiver?"

"Fifty."

"In all, one hundred and fifty."

"Yes," replied the Breton leaders.

"Is that your number, colonel?" asked Cadoudal, laughing.

"General, you are a wizard."

"No, no! I'm a poor peasant like the rest of them; but I command a troop in which each brain knows what it does, each heart beats singly for the two great principles of this world, religion and monarchy." Then, turning to his men he asked: "Who commands the advanced guard?"

"Fend-l'air," replied the two Chouans.

"And the rear-guard?"

"La Giberne."

The second answer was given with the same unanimity as the first.

"Then we can safely continue our way?"

"Yes, general, as if you were going to church in your own village."

"Let us ride on, colonel," said Cadoudal.

Turning to his men, he cried, "Be lively, my gars!"

Instantly each man jumped the ditch and disappeared. For a few seconds the sound of crackling branches and steps among the brushwood was heard, then nothing more.

"Well," said Cadoudal, "do you think that with such men as that I need fear the Blues, brave as they are?"

Roland heaved a sigh; he was fully of Cadoudal's opinion.

They rode on. About three miles from la Trinité a black object was seen upon the road approaching them with great rapidity. As it became more distinct it suddenly seemed to stop.

"What is that?" asked Roland.

"As you see, a man," replied Cadoudal.

"No doubt; but who is he?"

"You might have guessed from the rapidity of his coming, — a messenger."

"Why does he stop?"

"He sees us, and he does not know whether to advance or retreat."

"What will he do?"

"Wait before deciding."

"Wait for what?"

"A signal."

"Will he answer the signal?"

"Not only answer it, but obey it. Will you have him advance? Will you have him retreat? Will you have him step aside?"

"I wish him to advance; we shall then know the news he brings."

Cadoudal gave the note of a cuckoo, with such perfection that Roland looked about him for the bird.

"It was I," said Cadoudal.

"Will the messenger come?"

"He is coming."

The messenger had already started and was rapidly approaching them; in a few seconds he was beside his general.

"Ah," said the latter, "is it you, Monte-à-l'assaut?" Then he stooped, and Monte-à-l'assaut said a few words in his ear.

"I have already heard it from Bénédicité," said Cadoudal. Then, turning to Roland, he said, "Something of importance is about to happen in the village of la Trinité, which you ought to see. Come, let us hurry."

And suiting the action to the word, he put his horse at a gallop. Roland did the same. When they reached the village they could see from a distance, by the light of some pine torches, a tumultuous multitude. The cries and movements of this multitude showed that a serious event was taking place.

"Fast, fast!" cried Cadoudal.

Roland asked nothing better; he dug his spurs into his horse's belly.

Hearing the clatter of the horses' hoofs, the peasants parted

to right and left. There were six hundred of them at the least, all armed. Cadoudal and Roland were in a circle of light, the centre of the cries and agitation.

The crowd was pressing more particularly toward the opening of a street which led to the adjoining village of Tridon. A diligence was coming down that street, escorted by a dozen Chouans; two had taken the place of the postilions; ten others guarded the doors. In the middle of the market-place the coach stopped. Every one was so intent upon the vehicle that they paid but scant attention to Cadoudal.

"Hola!" cried the general, "what is all this?"

At the well-known voice, every one turned round, and heads were uncovered.

"Ha! the big round-head!" they murmured.

"Yes," said Cadoudal.

A man approached.

"Were not you notified by Bénédicité and Monte-à-l'assaut?" he asked.

"Yes; is that the diligence from Ploermel to Vannes that you are bringing back?"

"Yes, general; it was stopped between Tréfléon and Saint-Nolf."

"Is he in it?"

"They say so."

"Do according to your consciences: if it is a crime toward God, take it upon yourselves; I take only the responsibility toward men. I will be present at what takes place; but I shall not share in it, — either to hinder or to help."

"Well?" cried a hundred voices, "what does he say, Sabre-tout?"

"He says that we can do according to our consciences, and he washes his hands of it."

"Long live the big round-head!" cried all the people, rushing toward the diligence.

Cadoudal remained motionless in the midst of the torrent.

Roland sat his horse beside him, also motionless, but full of curiosity; he was, of course, completely ignorant of who, or what, was in question. The man who had just spoken to Cadoudal, and who went by the name of Sabre-tout, opened the door of the diligence. The travellers were then seen huddled together and trembling in the darkness within.

"If you have nothing to reproach yourselves with against God and the king," said Sabre-tout, in a full sonorous voice, "get out without fear; we are not brigands, we are Christians and royalists."

This declaration no doubt reassured the travellers, for a man got out, then two women, then a mother and child, and finally another man. The Chouans examined each attentively as they came down the carriage steps; not finding the man they wanted, they said to each traveller, "Pass on."

One man alone remained in the coach. A Chouan put a torch within the vehicle and it was seen he was a priest.

"Minister of the Lord," said Sabre-tout, "why did you not get out with the rest? Did you not hear me say we were Christians and royalists?"

The priest did not move; but his teeth chattered.

"Why such terror?" continued Sabre-tout. "Does not your cloth appeal to us? The man who wears a cassock can have done nothing against religion or royalty."

The priest crouched back in the vehicle, murmuring: —

"Mercy! mercy!"

"Why mercy?" asked Sabre-tout. "Of what are you guilty, wretch?"

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Roland; "is that how you Christians and royalists speak to a man of God?"

"That man," said Cadoudal, "is not a man of God, but a man of the devil."

"Who is he then?"

"He is an atheist and a regicide; he has denied God, and voted for the death of his king: that is the Conventional Audrein."

Roland shuddered.

"What will they do to him?" he asked.

"He gave death, he will receive death," replied Cadoudal.

During this time the Chouans had pulled the man out of the diligence.

"Ha! is it you, bishop of Vannes?" said Sabre-tout.

"Mercy!" cried the bishop.

"We were informed of your arrival; we are waiting for you."

"Mercy!" repeated the bishop for the third time.

"Have you your pontifical robes with you?"

"Yes, my friends, I have them."

"Then dress yourself as a prelate; it is long since we have seen one."

A trunk marked with the bishop's name was taken off the coach; it was opened; the bishop's robes were taken out, and he put them on. Then, when every article was in its place, the peasants ranged themselves in a circle, each with his musket in his hand. The glare of the torches were reflected on the barrels, casting evil gleams.

Two men took the bishop and led him within the circle; supporting him beneath his arms. He was pale as death. There was a moment of awful silence.

A voice broke it,—that of Sabre-tout.

"We are about," said the Chouan, "to judge you. Priest of God, you betrayed the Church; child of France, you condemned to death your king."

"Alas! alas!" stammered the priest.

"Is it true?"

"I do not deny it."

"Because it is impossible to deny it. What have you to say in justification?"

"Citizens —"

"We are not citizens," said Sabre-tout, in a voice of thunder, "we are royalists."

"Gentlemen —"

"We are not gentlemen, we are Chouans."

"My friends — "

"We are not your friends, we are your judges. Your judges are questioning you; answer."

"I repent of what I did, and I ask pardon of God and men."

"Men cannot pardon you," said the same implacable voice. "Pardoned to-day, you would sin again to-morrów; you may change your skin, but you will not change your heart. You have nothing to expect from men but death; as for God, implore his mercy."

The regicide bowed his head; the renegade bent his knee. But suddenly drawing himself up he cried: —

"I voted the death of the king, it is true, — but with a reservation."

"What reservation?"

"The time of execution."

"Sooner or later it was still the death of the king which you voted, and the king was innocent."

"True, true," said the priest, "but I was afraid — "

"So, then, you are not only a regicide, not only an apostate, but a coward! We are not priests, but we are more righteous than you: you have voted the death of the innocent; we have voted the death of the guilty. You have ten minutes in which to prepare to meet your God."

The bishop gave a cry of terror and fell on both knees, the church bells rang as though by their own impulse, and two of the men present, remembering the offices, began to chant the prayers for the dying. It was some time before the bishop found words with which to respond. He turned his terrified glances in supplication to his judges one after the other, but the consolation of even pity did not meet him on any face. On the contrary, the torches, which flickered in the wind, gave a savage and terrible expression to those countenances. Then, at last, he mingled his voice with the voices that were praying for him.

The judges allowed him to follow to the very close the

funeral prayer. During this time men were preparing a pile of wood.

"Oh!" cried the priest, suddenly beholding the preparations in horror, "you cannot have the cruelty to kill me thus?"

"No," replied his inflexible accuser, "flames are the death of martyrs; you are not worthy of such a death. Apostate, the hour has come."

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the priest, raising his arms to heaven.

"Stand up!" said the Chouan.

The bishop tried to obey, but his strength gave way, and he fell again upon his knees.

"Will you let that murder be done before your eyes?" said Roland, turning to Cadoudal.

"I said that I washed my hands of it," replied the leader.

"Pilate said that, and Pilate's hands are red to this day with the blood of Jesus Christ."

"Because Jesus Christ was a righteous man; this man is Barabbas."

"Kiss your cross! kiss your cross!" cried Sabre-tout.

The priest turned his eyes to him with a terrified air, but without obeying. It was evident that he no longer saw, no longer heard.

"Oh!" cried Roland, making an effort to dismount, "it shall never be said that a man was murdered before me, and I did not try to save him."

A threatening murmur rose around him; his words were heard. This was all that was needed to excite his impetuous spirit.

"Ha, so be it!" he cried, as he thrust his hand into the holster of his saddle.

But, with a movement rapid as thought, Cadoudal seized his hand, and as Roland vainly tried to wrench it from that grasp of iron, the Breton leader cried out: —

"Fire!"

Twenty shots resounded instantly, and the bishop fell, an inert mass.

"Ah!" cried Roland, "what have you done?"

"Forced you to keep your promise," said Cadoudal; "you had sworn to see all and hear all without opposing anything."

"So perish the enemies of God and the king," said Sabretout, in a solemn voice.

"Amen!" replied the spectators with one voice of awful unanimity.

Then they stripped the body of its sacerdotal ornaments, which they flung upon the pile of wood, invited the other travellers to take their places in the diligence, replaced the postilion on his saddle, and opening their ranks to give passage to the coach, they called out: —

"Go with God!"

The diligence rolled rapidly away.

"Come, let us go!" cried Cadoudal; "we have still nine miles to ride, and we have lost an hour here." Turning to the executioners, he added: "That man was guilty; that man is punished; human justice and divine justice are satisfied. Let prayers for the dead be said over his body, and give him Christian burial; do you hear me?"

And sure of being obeyed, Cadoudal put his horse to a gallop.

Roland seemed to hesitate for an instant as to whether he should follow him; then, as if he were resolving to accomplish a duty, he said aloud: —

"I will go to the end."

Spurring his horse in the direction taken by Cadoudal, he overtook the Chouan leader in a few strides. Both disappeared into the darkness, which grew thicker and thicker, as they left the place where the torches were illuminating the priest's dead face, and the fire was consuming his vestments.

VII.

THE DIPLOMACY OF GEORGES CADOUDAL.

The feeling that Roland had, as he followed Georges Cadoudal, was like that of a man half-awakened, who is under the influence of a dream, and returns, little by little, from the boundaries which separate night from day; he tries to discover whether the ground he steps on is that of fiction or reality, and the more he burrows into the dimness of his brain, the farther he buries himself in doubt.

A man existed for whom Roland felt a worship like that for a divine being; accustomed to live in the atmosphere of glory that surrounded that man, to see others obeying his commands, and to obey them himself with a promptness and abnegation that were almost Oriental, it seemed amazing to him to encounter at the opposite ends of France two other organized powers, enemies of the power of that man, and prepared to struggle against it. Suppose a Jew of Judas Maccabæus, a worshipper of Jehovah, having, from his youth up, heard him called the King of Kings, the mighty God, the avenging God, the God of armies, the Eternal, coming suddenly face to face with the mystical Osiris of the Egyptians or the thundering Jupiter of the Greeks. His adventures at Avignon and at Bourg with Morgan and The Company of Jehu, his adventures in the villages of Bourg and la Trinité with Cadoudal and the Chouans, seemed to him like a strange initiation into some unknown religion; but like those courageous neophytes who dare all to learn the secrets of initiation, he now determined to see matters to an end.

Besides, he was not without a certain admiration for these exceptional characters; he felt a decided amazement

as he took the measure of the rebel Titans who were challenging his god; he felt they were not in any sense common men, — neither those who had stabbed Sir John in the Chartreuse nor those who had shot the Bishop of Vannes at la Trinité. And now, what was he about to see? He was soon to know, for they had ridden five hours and a half and the day was breaking.

Beyond the village of Tridon, they turned across country; leaving Vannes to the left, they reached Tréfléon. At Tréfléon, Cadoudal, still followed by his major-general, Branche-d'Or, again called up the leaders Monte-à-l'assaut and Chante-en-hiver, gave them further orders, and continued his way, bearing to the left and skirting the edges of the little wood which lies between Grandchamp and Larré. There, Cadoudal halted, imitated, three separate times, the hoot of an owl, and was presently surrounded by his three hundred men.

A grayish light was spreading in the sky beyond Tréfléon and Saint-Nolf; it was not the rising of the sun, but the first breaking of the day. A thick mist rose from the earth, and prevented the eye from seeing more than fifty feet beyond it. Cadoudal seemed to be expecting news before risking himself further.

Suddenly, about five hundred paces distant, the crowing of a cock was heard. Cadoudal listened eagerly; his men looked at each other and laughed.

The cock crowed again, but nearer.

"It is he," said Cadoudal, "answer him."

The howling of a dog was heard three times, imitated with such perfection that Roland, although aware of what it was, looked about him for the animal that was uttering such lugubrious sounds. Almost at the same moment he saw a man coming rapidly through the mist, his form growing more and more distinct as he advanced.

The new-comer saw the two horsemen and went toward them.

Cadoudal rode a few steps in advance, putting his finger

on his lips as if to request the stranger to speak low. The latter, consequently, did not pause or speak until he was close beside the general.

"Well, Fleur-d'Épine," inquired Georges, "have we got him?"

"Like a mouse in a trap; not one can re-enter Vannes, if you say the word."

"I desire nothing better. How many are there?"

"A hundred men, commanded by the general in person."

"How many waggons?"

"Seventeen."

"When did they start?"

"They ought to be now about a mile and three quarters from here."

"What road?"

"Grandchamp to Vannes."

"So that if I deploy from Meucon to Plescop —"

"You 'll bar their way."

"That 's all I want to know."

Calling up his four lieutenants, Chante-en-hiver, Monte-à-l'assaut, Fend-l'air, and Giberne, Cadoudal gave each of them fifty men, and each, with his company, disappeared in the mist, giving as he did so the well-known hoot. Cadoudal was left with a hundred men, Branche-d'Or, and Fleur-d'épine. He returned to Roland.

"Well, general," said the latter, "is everything satisfactory to you?"

"Yes, very nearly, colonel," replied the Chouan, "but you shall judge for yourself in half an hour?"

"It will be difficult to judge of anything in this fog."

Cadoudal cast his eyes about him.

"In half an hour it will all be gone," he said. "Will you utilize the time by eating a mouthful and drinking a glass?"

"Faith!" cried Roland, "I will admit that the ride has hollowed me."

"I make a point," said Georges, "before fighting, to breakfast as best I can."

"Are you going to fight?"

"I think so."

"Against whom?"

"The Republicans, of course; and as we have to do with General Hatry in person, I doubt if they surrender without resistance."

"Do they know they are going to fight you?"

"They have n't the least idea of it."

"So it is to be a surprise?"

"Not exactly; because when the fog lifts, they will see us as plainly as we shall see them." Then turning to the man who seemed to be in charge of the provisions, "Brise-Bleu," he added, "is there anything for breakfast?"

Brise-Bleu nodded affirmatively, went into the wood, and came out again dragging after him a donkey loaded with hampers. A cloak was then spread on a rise of the ground, and on it were placed a roast chicken, a bit of cold salt pork, some bread, and buckwheat cakes. This time Brise-Bleu had provided luxury in the shape of a bottle of wine and a glass.

Cadoudal motioned Roland to the improvised repast. The young man sprang from his horse, throwing the bridle to a Chouan. Cadoudal did likewise.

"Now," said the latter, turning to his men, "you have half an hour to do as we do. Those who have not breakfasted within half an hour are hereby notified that they must fight on empty stomachs."

The invitation seemed equivalent to an order, so promptly and precisely was it executed. Every man pulled from his bag or his pocket a bit of bread or a buckwheat cake, and followed the example of his general, who had already divided the chicken between Roland and himself. As there was but one glass, the two officers shared it.

While they were thus breakfasting side by side like two friends on a hunt, the sun rose, and the mist, as Cadoudal had predicted, became less and less dense. Soon the nearest trees could be distinguished; then the line of woods

stretching on the right from Meucon to Grandchamp; while to left the plain of Plescop, threaded by a rivulet, could gradually be seen as it sloped toward Vannes. This natural declivity of the ground as it neared the ocean was distinctly perceptible.

On the road from Grandchamp to Plescop a line of waggons were now visible, the tail of which was still in the woods. The line was halted; evidently some unforeseen obstacle had stopped it.

In fact, about a quarter of a mile before the leading waggon the two hundred Chouans under Cadoudal's four lieutenants were now seen, barring the way. The Republicans, inferior in numbers, — we have already said there were but a hundred, — halted, and were awaiting the total dispersion of the fog to determine the number and character of the enemies they were about to meet. Men and waggons were now in a triangle of which Cadoudal and his hundred men formed one of the points.

At sight of this small number of men thus surrounded by triple forces, and of the well-known uniform, the color of which gave its name to the Republican forces, Roland sprang to his feet. As for Cadoudal, he remained where he was, carelessly finishing his meal. Of the hundred men who surrounded him not one seemed to pay any heed to the spectacle that was now before their eyes; it almost seemed as if they were waiting for Cadoudal's order to even look at it.

Roland had only to cast his eyes on the position of the Republicans to see that they were lost. Cadoudal watched the various changes of feeling on the face of the young man as they rapidly succeeded each other.

"Well," said the Chouan, after a moment's silence, "do you think my dispositions well taken?"

"You had better say your precautions, general?" said Roland, with a rather bitter smile.

"Is n't it the First Consul's way to make the most of his advantages when he gets them?" asked Cadoudal.

Roland bit his lips: then, instead of answering the question of the royalist leader, he said:—

"General, if I ask you a favor I hope you will not refuse it."

"And that is?"

"Permission to let me go and be killed with my comrades."

Cadoudal rose.

"I expected that request," he said.

"Then you grant it?" cried Roland, his eyes sparkling with joy.

"Yes; but, first, I have a service to ask of you," said the royalist chief, with supreme dignity.

"Ask it, monsieur."

"To bear my flag of truce to General Hatry."

"For what purpose?"

"I have proposals to make to him before the fight begins."

"I presume that among those proposals with which you deign to entrust me, you do not include that of laying down his arms?"

"On the contrary, colonel, that is the very first of my proposals."

"General Hatry will refuse it."

"Probably."

"And then?"

"Then I shall give him his choice between two other proposals, which he can accept, I think, without forfeiting his honor."

"What are they?"

"I will tell you in due time. Let us begin with the first."

"State it."

"General Hatry and his hundred men are surrounded by a triple force. I offer them their lives; but they must lay down their arms and make oath not to serve again in La Vendée for five years."

Roland shook his head; Cadoudal replied to the gesture: —

"Better that than to be annihilated with his men."

"May be so; but he would rather his men were annihilated, and he with them."

"Don't you think, however," said Cadoudal, laughing, "that it might be well, in any case, to ask him?"

"True," said Roland.

"The colonel's horse!" said Cadoudal, making a sign to the Chouan who was holding it. The man led it up. Roland sprang upon it, and was instantly seen crossing the space which separated them from the Republicans.

A group of men were standing on the flank of the convoy; it was formed evidently of General Hatry and his officers. Roland rode toward it, scarcely three gunshots distant from the Chouans. General Hatry's astonishment was great when he saw an officer in the uniform of a Republican colonel approaching him. He left the group, and advanced some paces toward the messenger.

Roland made himself known, related how he came to be among the Whites, and transmitted Cadoudal's propositions. As he had foreseen, General Hatry refused them. Roland then rode back toward Cadoudal with a proud and joyful heart.

"He refuses!" he cried, as soon as his voice could be heard.

Cadoudal gave a nod which seemed to say that he was not surprised at the refusal.

"In that case," he said, "go back and take him my second proposition; I don't wish to have anything to reproach myself with under the eyes of such a judge of honor as you."

Roland bowed.

"Your second proposition?" he said.

"General Hatry shall meet me in the space that separates our two forces; he shall carry the same weapons that I do, — that is, his sabre and pistols, — and the matter shall be

decided between us. If I kill him, his men are to submit under the conditions already named; if he kills me, his men and convoy are to pass free and be allowed to reach Vannes safely. Come, there 's a proposition I hope you will approve of, colonel."

"I 'd accept it myself!" cried Roland.

"Yes, but you are not General Hatry. Content yourself, this time, with being a negotiator, and if that proposition, (which if I were he I would n't let escape me) does n't please him, come back to me; for I am not a bad fellow, and I 'll make him a third."

Roland rode off a second time; his coming was awaited by the Republicans with visible impatience. The proposal was transmitted.

"Citizen," replied General Hatry, "I must render account of my conduct to General Bonaparte. You are his aide-de-camp; and I charge you on your return to Paris to bear testimony on my behalf to him. What would you do in my place? Whatever you would do, that I shall do."

Roland quivered; his face took the grave expression of a man who is arguing a question of honor in his own mind. Then, at the end of a few moments, he said: —

"General, I should refuse."

"Your reasons, citizen?" demanded the general.

"The chances of a duel are doubtful; you cannot subject the fate of a hundred brave men to a doubtful chance. In an affair like this every man had better defend his own skin as best he can."

"That is your opinion, colonel?"

"Upon my honor!"

"It is also mine; carry my reply to the royalist commander."

Roland returned to Cadoudal at a gallop and gave him General Hatry's reply.

Cadoudal smiled.

"I expected it," he said.

"You would n't have expected it had you known that it was I who advised it," said Roland.

"You thought differently ten minutes ago?"

"Yes; but then, as you observed to me, I was not General Hatry. Now for your third proposal," said Roland, rather impatiently; for he began to perceive, or rather he had perceived from the beginning, that the noble part in the affair belonged to the royalist general.

"My third proposition," said Cadoudal, "is not a proposition at all; it is an order, — an order to my two hundred men to withdraw. General Hatry has a hundred men, I have a hundred with me. My Breton forefathers were accustomed to fight foot to foot, breast to breast, man to man, and oftener one to three than three to one. If General Hatry is the victor he can walk over our bodies and tranquilly enter Vannes; if he is defeated he cannot say it is by numbers. Go, Monsieur de Montrevel, and remain with your friends; I give them thus an advantage in numbers, for you alone are worth ten other men."

Roland raised his hat.

"What does that mean?" asked Cadoudal.

"I bow to that which is grand, monsieur; I bow to you."

"Come, colonel," said Cadoudal, "let us drink a last glass of wine together; let each of us drink to that we love best; to that which we grieve to leave behind us; to that we hope to meet in heaven."

Taking the bottle and the single glass, he poured the wine and offered it to Roland.

"Drink first," he said; "we have but one glass."

"Why first?"

"Because you are my guest, and also because there is a proverb that whoso drinks after another knows his thought." Then he added, laughing, "I wish to know your thought, Monsieur de Montrevel."

Roland emptied the glass. Cadoudal filled it again and emptied it himself.

"And now, general," said Roland, "do you know my thought?"

"No," said Cadoudal, "the proverb is false."

"Well," said Roland, with his usual frankness, "my thought is that you are a brave man, general; and I shall feel honored if, at this moment when we are going to fight one against the other, you will give me your hand."

The two young men clasped hands, more like friends parting for a long absence than two enemies about to meet upon a battlefield. A simple grandeur, full of majesty, was in all that had taken place. Each raised his hat.

"Good luck to you!" said Roland to Cadoudal. "But allow me to doubt it. I must even confess that the wish is from my lips, not my heart."

"God keep you!" said Cadoudal; "and I hope that my wish for you will be realized. It is the honest expression of my thoughts."

"What is to be the signal that you are ready?" asked Roland.

"A musket shot fired in the air, to which you will reply in the same way.

"Very good, general," replied Roland.

And putting his horse to a gallop, he crossed for the third time the space between the royalist and the Republican forces.

"Friends," said Cadoudal to his men, stretching his hand toward Roland, "you see that young man?"

All eyes were turned to Roland. "Yes" came from every mouth.

"Well," continued Cadoudal, "he came here with a safe-conduct from our brethren in the South; his life is sacred to us; he may be captured, but it must be living, — not a hair of his head is to be touched."

"So be it, general," replied the Chouans.

"And now, friends, remember that you are the sons of the thirty Bretons who fought the thirty British between Ploermel and Josselin, ten leagues from here, and conquered them." Then, with a sigh in his voice, he added, "Unhappily we have not to do with foreigners this time."

The fog had now completely dispersed, and, as often happens in such a case, a few rays of the wintry sun were tingeing with a yellow light the plain of Plescop. It was easy to distinguish all the movements of the two forces. While Roland was returning to the Republicans, Branche-d'Or had started at a gallop toward the two hundred royalists who were blocking the way. He had hardly spoken to the four lieutenants before a hundred men were seen to wheel to the right and a hundred more to wheel to the left and march in opposite directions; one toward Plumergat, the other to Saint-Avé, leaving the road open. Each body halted about a mile from the road, grounded arms, and remained motionless. Branche-d'Or returned to Cadoudal.

"Have you any special orders to give me, general?" he said.

"Yes, one," said Cadoudal; "take eight men and follow me. When you see that young Republican officer with whom I breakfasted fall under his horse, fling yourself upon him, you and your eight men, before he has time to free himself, and take him prisoner."

"Yes, general."

"You know that I must have him safe and sound?"

"That's understood."

"Choose your eight men; Monsieur de Montrevel once captured and his parole given, you can do what you like."

"Suppose he won't give his parole?"

"Wrap him or bind him so that he can't escape, and watch him till the fight is over."

"So be it!" said Branche-d'Or with a sigh; "but it is hard to stand with folded arms while the others are having their fun."

"Pooh, who knows?" said Cadoudal, "probably there'll be enough for everybody."

Then, casting a glance over the plain and seeing his own men stationed apart and the Republicans massed for battle, he called out: —

"A musket!"

They brought one. Cadoudal raised it above his head and fired in the air. Almost at the same moment, a shot, fired in the same manner from the midst of the Republicans, answered like an echo to that of Cadoudal. Two drums beating the advance and a bugle were heard. Cadoudal rose in his stirrups.

"Children," he asked, "have you said your morning prayers?"

"Yes, yes!" answered every voice.

"If any of you forgot them there is still time."

Five or six peasants knelt down and prayed.

The drums and the bugle came nearer.

"General! general!" cried several voices, impatiently, "they are coming."

The general showed the kneeling peasants with a motion of his hand.

"True," said the impatient ones.

Those who had prayed rose, one by one. By the time they were all afoot the Republicans had nearly crossed one third of the distance. They marched, bayonets fixed, in three ranks, each rank three abreast. Roland rode at the head of the first column; General Hatry between the first and the second. Both were easily recognized, being the only men on horseback. Among the Chouans Cadoudal was the only rider, for Branche-d'Or had dismounted to take command of the eight men who were to follow their chief.

"General," said a voice, "the prayer is ended."

Cadoudal looked about him to make sure it was true; then in a loud strong voice he cried out: —

"Forward! Enjoy yourselves, my lads!"

This permission, which to Chouans and Vendéans was equivalent to sounding a charge, was scarcely given before the Chouans spread over the plain, to cries of "Vive le roi!" waving their hats with one hand and their guns with the other. Instead of keeping in rank like the Republicans, they scattered like sharp-shooters, taking the line of a large crescent, of which Georges and his horse were the centre.

In a moment the Republicans were flanked and the firing began. Cadoudal's men were nearly all poachers, — that is to say, excellent marksmen, — armed with English carbines able to carry twice the length of the army muskets. Though the first shots fired might have seemed wide of the mark, they nevertheless brought down several men in the Republican ranks.

"Forward!" cried General Hatry.

The soldiers marched on, bayonets fixed; but in a few moments they found no enemy before them. Cadoudal's hundred men had turned into skirmishers; fifty men were harassing each flank of the Republicans.

General Hatry ordered his men to wheel to the right and left. Then came the order: —

"Fire!"

Two volleys followed, with the precision and unanimity of disciplined troops; they were almost without result, for the Republicans were firing upon scattered men. Not so with the Chouans, who fired on a mass; with them every shot told.

Roland saw the disadvantage of the position. He looked about him, and amid the smoke he distinguished Cadoudal, erect and motionless as an equestrian statue. He felt certain that the royalist leader expected him. With a cry he rode straight at him. As if to save his assailant part of the distance Cadoudal put his horse at a gallop. But at a hundred feet from Roland he drew rein.

"Attention!" he said to Branche-d'Or and his men.

"Easy, general, we are here!" answered Branche-d'Or.

Cadoudal drew a pistol from his holster and cocked it.

Roland, sabre in hand, was charging, crouched on the neck of his horse.

When they were twenty steps apart Cadoudal slowly raised his hand in Roland's direction.

At ten paces he fired.

The horse which Roland rode had a star upon its forehead. The ball struck the centre of that star, and the

horse, mortally wounded, rolled over with its rider at Cadoudal's feet.

Cadoudal put spurs to his own steed and leaped both horse and rider.

Branche-d'Or and his men were ready. They sprang like a pack of jaguars upon Roland, entangled under the body of his horse. The young man dropped his sabre and tried to seize his pistols, but before he could lay hand upon the holsters two men had him by the arms, while the four others dragged the horse from between his legs. The thing was done with such unanimity that it was easy to see the manœuvre was planned.

Roland roared with rage. Branche-d'Or came up to him and gave him his hat.

"I don't surrender!" shouted Roland.

"Useless to do so, Monsieur de Montrevel," said Branche-d'or, with the utmost politeness.

"What do you mean?" cried Roland, exhausting his strength in a desperate struggle.

"Because you are captured."

It was so true that no answer could be made.

"Then kill me!" cried Roland.

"We don't wish to kill you," said Branche-d'Or

"Then what do you want?"

"Give us your word that you won't continue to fight, and you are free."

"Never!" shouted Roland.

"Excuse me, Monsieur de Montrevel," said Branche-d'Or, "but that is not loyal."

"How?" cried Roland, in a fury of anger. "Not loyal! Do you dare insult me, villain, because you know I can't defend myself, or punish you?"

"I am not a villain, and I do not insult you, Monsieur de Montrevel; but I do say that by not giving your word you deprive the general of the services of nine men who might be useful to him, and who are obliged to stay here and guard you. That's not how the big round-head acted

toward you; he had two hundred men more than you and he sent them away. Now we have only ninety-one against a hundred."

A flame passed across Roland's face; then as suddenly he turned pale as death.

"You are right, Branche-d'Or," he answered. "Succor or no succor, I surrender; you and your men can go and fight."

The Chouans gave a cry of joy, let go their hold on Roland, and rushed toward the Republicans, waving their hats and guns and shouting: —

"Vive le roi!"

Roland, freed of their grip, but disarmed, physically by his fall, morally by his promise, went to the little eminence, still covered with a cloak which had served as a table-cloth for their breakfast, and sat down. From there he could see the whole combat; not a detail was lost upon him.

Cadoudal sat erect upon his horse amid the fire and smoke, like the Demon of War, implacable, invulnerable. Here and there the bodies of a dozen or more Chouans lay stretched upon the sod. But it was evident that the Republicans, still massed together, had lost more than double that number. Wounded men were dragging themselves along the vacant spaces, meeting, rearing their bodies like mangled snakes, and again fighting, the Republicans with their bayonets, the Chouans with their knives. Those of the wounded Chouans who were too far off to fight their wounded enemies hand to hand reloaded their guns, rose to their knees, discharged their weapons, and fell back. On either side the fight was pitiless, incessant, furious; civil war — that is, war without mercy, without compassion — waved its torch above the battle-field.

Cadoudal rode his horse around those living breastworks, firing at twenty paces, sometimes his pistols, sometimes a musket, which he discharged and cast aside and picked up again reloaded. At each discharge a soldier fell. The third time that he made this round General Hatry did him

the honor of a fusillade; a whole company fired at him. The Chouan leader disappeared in the flame and smoke, and Roland saw him go down, he and his horse, as if annihilated.

Ten or a dozen Republicans sprang from the ranks and met as many Chouans; the struggle was terrible, hand to hand, body to body, but the Chouans with their knives were sure of the advantage.

Suddenly Cadoudal appeared, erect, a pistol in each hand; it was the death of two men; two men fell. Then through the gap left by the ten or twelve, he flung himself onward with thirty. He had picked up a musket and used it as a club; each blow brought down a man. He broke his way through the whole battalion, coming out on the other side. Then, like a boar which returns upon the huntsman he has ripped up and trampled, he rushed back through the gaping wound and widened it.

From that moment all was over for the Republicans.

General Hatry rallied a score of men, and with bayonets down they fell upon the circle that enveloped them; the general was on foot, his horse was killed. Ten of his twenty men had fallen before that circle was broken; but at last he was beyond it. The Chouans wanted to pursue him, but Cadoudal in a voice of thunder called them back.

"You ought not to have let him pass," he cried; "but having passed, he is free to retreat."

The Chouans obeyed with the religious faith they placed in the words of their chief.

"And now," said Cadoudal, "cease firing; no more dead; make prisoners."

The scattered Chouans drew together and surrounded the heaps of slain and the few living men, more or less wounded, who lay among the bodies. Surrendering was still combating in this fatal war, where, on both sides, prisoners were shot,—on one side, because Chouans and Vendéans were considered as brigands; on the other side, because they knew not where to put the captives.

The Republicans threw their guns away that they might

not have to surrender them. When their adversaries approached them it was seen that each man's cartridge-box was empty; he had fired his last shot.

Cadoudal walked back to Roland.

During the whole of this desperate struggle the young man had sat on the mound. With his eyes fixed on the battle, his hair damp with sweat, his breast heaving, he had waited for the result. Then, when he saw the day was lost, his head fell into his hands and he still sat on,— his forehead bowed to earth. Cadoudal came to him before he seemed to hear the sound of steps. The general touched his shoulder; the young man slowly raised his head without attempting to hide the tears that were rolling down his cheeks.

"General," said Roland, "do what you will with me; I am your prisoner."

"I can't make an ambassador from the First Consul a prisoner," replied Cadoudal, laughing; "but I can ask him to do me a service."

"Command me, general."

"I have no ambulances for the wounded; and I lack a prison for prisoners; have the kindness to take the Republican soldiers, prisoners or wounded, back to Vannes."

"General!" exclaimed Roland.

"I give them to you, or rather I confide them to you; I regret that your horse is killed; so is mine, but there is still that of Brise-Bleu; accept it."

The young man made a motion of rejection.

"Until you can obtain another, of course," said Cadoudal, bowing.

Roland felt that he must put himself, in simplicity at least, at the height of him with whom he had to do.

"Shall I see you again, general?" he asked, rising.

"I doubt it, monsieur; my operations call me to the neighborhood of Porte-Louis; your duty recalls you to the Luxembourg."

"What shall I tell the First Consul, general?"

"That which you have seen, monsieur; let him judge

between the diplomacy of the Abbé Bernier and that of Georges Cadoudal."

"After what I have seen, monsieur, I doubt if you will ever need me," said Roland; "but in any case, remember that you have a friend near General Bonaparte."

And he held out his hand to Cadoudal. The royalist leader took it with the same frankness and freedom he had shown before the fight.

"Farewell, Monsieur de Montrevel," he said. "I need not ask you to justify General Hatry. A defeat like that is fully as glorious as a victory."

During this time Branche-d'Or's horse was led up for the Republican colonel.

He sprang into the saddle.

"By the bye," said Cadoudal, "as you go through la Roche-Bernard make some inquiries about the fate of citizen Thomas Millière."

"He is dead," said a voice.

Cœur-de-Roi and his four men, covered with mud and sweat, had just arrived; but too late to take part in the fight.

Roland threw a last glance on the field of battle, heaved a sigh, and waving a last farewell to Cadoudal, started at a gallop across the fields to await on the road to Vannes the waggon-load of wounded and the prisoners he was asked to deliver to General Hatry.

Cadoudal had given a crown of six francs to each man. Roland could not help reflecting that the gift was made with the money of the Directory, sent to the West by The Company of Jehu.

VIII.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

Roland's first visit on reaching Paris was to the First Consul; he brought him the two-fold news of the pacification of La Vendée and of the increasingly bitter warfare of Brittany.

Bonaparte knew Roland; consequently the triple narrative of Thomas Millière's murder, the killing of the Bishop of Vannes, and the fight at Grandchamp produced a deep impression upon him. There was, moreover, in the young man's manner a sombre despair which he could not hide. He blamed himself bitterly for singling out Cadoudal in the fight and thus exposing himself to a scheme for capturing him, instead of flinging himself into the fray and killing or being killed. He praised and defended General Hatry, but, just and impartial as a soldier should be, he gave full credit to Cadoudal for the courage and generosity he displayed.

Bonaparte listened gravely, almost sadly; ardent as he was for foreign war with its glorious halos, his soul revolted at the intestine strifes which drained the life's blood of the nation and rent its bowels. It was a case in which, to his thinking, negotiation should take the place of war. But how negotiate with a man like Cadoudal? Bonaparte was not unaware of his own personal seductions when he chose to exercise them; he resolved to see Cadoudal, and without saying anything on the subject to Roland, he intended to make use of him for the interview when the time came. Meantime he wanted to see if Brune, in whose talent he had great confidence, would do any better under the circumstances than his predecessors.

He now dismissed Roland, after telling him of the arrival of his mother and her installation in the little house in the rue de la Victoire.

Roland sprang into a coach and was driven there at once. He found Madame de Montrevel as happy and proud as a woman and a mother could be. Édouard had gone the evening before to the Prytanée Français, and she herself was making ready to leave Paris and return to Amélie, whose health continued to give her much anxiety.

As for Sir John Tanlay, he was not only out of danger, but he was almost well again, and was now in Paris.

He had called to see Madame de Montrevel the evening before; finding that she had gone with Édouard to the Prytanée, he left his card. On the card was the address Hôtel Mirabeau, rue de Richelieu.

It was eleven o'clock, Sir John's breakfast time, and Roland had every chance of finding him at that hour. He got back into the carriage and ordered the coachman to stop at the Hôtel Mirabeau. There, sure enough, he found Sir John sitting before an English breakfast (a thing rarely seen in those days), drinking large cups of tea and eating bloody mutton-chops.

As soon as the Englishman saw Roland he gave a cry of joy and went up to him. Roland himself had acquired a deep affection for that exceptional nature in which the noblest qualities of the heart seemed striving to hide themselves beneath his national eccentricities. Sir John was pale and thin; but in other respects he was well. His wound had healed, and except for a slight oppression, which was daily diminishing and would soon disappear altogether, he had almost recovered his former health. He now welcomed Roland with a tenderness scarcely to have been expected in that reserved nature, declaring that the joy he felt in seeing him again was all he wanted for complete recovery.

He begged Roland to share the meal, telling him to order his own breakfast *à la Française*. Roland accepted.

Like all soldiers who had fought the hard wars of the Revolution, when bread was often lacking, Roland cared little for what he ate; and he had taken a habit of eating heartily whatever was put before him, as a precaution against the days when there might be nothing at all to eat. Sir John's attention in asking him to make a French breakfast was therefore scarcely noticed by him; but what he did notice instantly was Sir John's preoccupation of mind. It was evident that his friend had something on his lips that he hesitated to utter. He thought he had better help him to get it out.

So, when breakfast was nearly over, Roland, with his accustomed frankness, which went very near at times to incivility, put his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands, and remarked: —

"My dear Sir John, you have something to say to your friend Roland which you don't dare to say."

Sir John started; pale as he was, he became crimson.

"Confound it!" cried Roland, "it must be fearfully hard to get out! You may have a number of things to ask of me, but I know of few that I should have the right to refuse you. So go on; I 'm listening."

And Roland shut his eyes as if to concentrate all his attention on what Sir John might say. But the matter was evidently, from Sir John's point of view, so extremely difficult to make known that at the end of a dozen or more seconds, finding that Sir John said nothing, Roland opened them again.

The Englishman was again pale, but this time he was paler than before he had blushed. Roland held out his hand to him.

"Come," he said, "I see you want to make me some complaint of the way you were treated at the château des Noires-Fontaines."

"Just so," replied Sir John; "for the happiness or misery of my life will date from the time I stayed there."

Roland looked at him fixedly.

"Ah, the devil! can I be so fortunate — "

Then he stopped, remembering that from the social point of view what he was about to say was unconventional.

"Oh!" said Sir John, "my dear Roland finish what you were saying."

"You wish it?"

"I implore it."

"But if I am mistaken — if I commit some folly?"

"My friend, my friend, go on!"

"Well, as I was saying, can I be so fortunate as to find your Highness in love with my sister?"

Sir John gave a cry of joy, and with a rapid movement of which so phlegmatic a man might have been thought incapable, he flung himself into the arms of his friend.

"Your sister is an angel, my dear Roland," he cried, "and I love her with all my soul!"

"Are you entirely free to do so, Sir John?"

"Entirely. For the last twelve years, as I told you, I have had my fortune in my own hands; it amounts to twenty-five thousand pounds sterling a year."

"That is too much, my dear fellow, for a woman who can only bring you some fifty thousand francs."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Englishman, with the national intonation that returned to him in moments of emotion. "If I must get rid of a part of it I can do so."

"No," said Roland, laughing, "that will not be necessary. You are rich, and that 's bad; but what 's to be done? No, that 's not the difficulty. You say you love my sister?"

"I adore her!"

"But she?" said Roland, "does she love you?"

"Of course you know," replied Sir John, "that I have not asked her. I was bound, my dear Roland, to speak first to you, and if the matter were agreeable to you, to beg you to plead my cause with your mother. After that, after I have obtained the consent of both, I shall make my offer; or rather, my dear Roland, you must make it for me. I should never dare to myself."

"Then I am now receiving your first avowal?"

"You are my best friend, and it ought to be so."

"Well, my dear fellow, as far as I am concerned, your suit is won — naturally."

"But your mother and sister?"

"They will be one in such a matter. You understand? my mother will leave Amélie entirely free to choose her husband, and I need not tell you that if the choice should fall on you my mother will be perfectly delighted. But there is a person whom you forget."

"Who is that?" asked Sir John, in the tone of a man who having long weighed all chances pro and con believes that he knows them all, and is suddenly arrested by an obstacle he has never thought of.

"The First Consul," said Roland.

"God damn —" ejaculated the Englishman, swallowing the last word of the national oath.

"He spoke to me just before I left for La Vendée about my sister's marriage," continued Roland, "saying that we were to give the matter no further thought, my mother and I, for he would take charge of it."

"Then it is all up with me," said Sir John

"Why?"

"Because he hates the English."

"Say that the English hate him."

"But who will present my wishes to the First Consul?"

"I will."

"Will you speak of them as agreeable to yourself?"

"I 'll turn you into a dove of peace between the two nations," said Roland, rising.

"Oh! thank you!" cried Sir John, seizing the young man's hand. Then he added, regretfully, "Must you leave me?"

"My dear friend, I have leave for only a few hours; one I gave to my mother, two to you, and I must take another for your friend Édouard; I want to kiss him, and to beg his masters to let him scuffle as he likes

with his comrades. After that I must get back to the Luxembourg."

"Well, take him my compliments, and say that I have ordered a pair of pistols for him, so that the next time he is attacked by bandits he need n't use those of the conductor."

Roland looked at Sir John.

"What 's all that?" he asked.

"Don't you know?"

"No; what is it I don't know?"

"A thing that nearly killed our poor Amélie when she heard of it."

"What thing?"

"The attack on the diligence."

"But what diligence?"

"The one in which your mother was."

"The diligence my mother was in was attacked?"

"You have seen her, and she did not tell you?"

"Not a word."

"Well, my dear Édouard proved a hero; as no one else defended the coach, he did. He took the conductor's pistols and fired."

"Brave boy!" cried Roland.

"Yes; but unluckily, or luckily, the conductor had taken the precaution to leave out the bullets. Édouard was praised and caressed by the gentlemen of The Company of Jehu as the bravest of the brave; but he killed none of them."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"I tell you your sister almost died of fright."

"Very good," said Roland.

"How, very good?"

"I mean, all the more reason I should see Édouard."

"What makes you say that?"

"A plan."

"Tell me what it is?"

"No, I won't. My plans don't turn out well for you."

"But you know, my dear Roland, that if there are any reprisals to make — "

"I 'll make them for both; you are in love, my dear fellow, live in your love."

"You promise to support it?"

"Yes, faithfully; it is little enough to do for you."

"Thanks."

They pressed each other's hands and parted.

A quarter of an hour later Roland was at the Prytanée Français, which stood then where the lyceum of Louis-le-Grand now stands, — that is to say, at the head of the rue Saint-Jacques, behind the Sorbonne.

At the first words of the director Roland saw that his young brother had been especially recommended to the authorities. Édouard was sent for. The boy flung himself into the arms of his "big brother" with the passionate adoration that he felt for him. After the first embraces and inquiries were over, Roland asked about the stoppage of the diligence. Madame de Montrevel had been chary of mentioning it, Sir John had been sober in statement, but not so Édouard. It was his Iliad, his very own. Therefore he now related it with every detail, — Jérôme's connivance with the bandits, the pistols loaded with powder only, his mother's fainting-fit, the attentions paid to her by those who had caused it, his own name known to the robbers, the fall of the mask from the face of the one who was restoring his mother, his certainty that she must have seen him.

Roland was above all struck with that last particular.

Then the boy related his audience with the First Consul, and told how the great general kissed him, caressed him, and petted him, and finally recommended him personally to the director of the Prytanée Français.

Roland obtained from the child all that he wanted to know, and as it took but five minutes to go from the rue Saint-Jacques to the Luxembourg, he was at the palace in that time.

IX.

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING.

When Roland re-entered the Luxembourg the clock of the palace marked one hour and a quarter after mid-day.

The First Consul was working with Bourrienne.

If we were merely writing a novel, we should hasten to the finale, and in order to get there expeditiously we should neglect certain details which, it is said, great historical figures can do without. That is not our opinion. From the day when we first put pen to paper, now some thirty years ago, whether our thought were concentrated into a drama, or whether it spread itself into a novel, we have had a double aim, — to instruct and amuse.

And we say "to instruct" first; for amusement has never been, to our mind, anything but the mask of instruction. Have we succeeded? We think so. Before long we shall have covered with our narratives an enormous period of time; between the "Comtesse de Salisbury" and the "Comte de Monte-Cristo," five centuries and a half are comprised. Well, we assert that we have taught France as much history about those five centuries and a half as any historian.

More than that; though our private opinions are well known; though, under the Bourbons of the Elder branch as under the Bourbons of the Younger, under the Republic as under the present government, we have always loudly proclaimed those opinions, we believe that they have never been unduly manifested in our books and dramas. We admire the Marquis de Posa in Schiller's "Don Carlos;" but if we had been Schiller, we should not have antici-

pated the spirit of that age by putting a philosopher of the eighteenth century among the heroes of the sixteenth, an encyclopædist at the court of Philippe II. Therefore, just as we have been, in a literary sense, monarchical under a monarchy, republican under the republic, we are here, to-day, reconstructionist under the consulate.

That does not prevent our thought from hovering above men, above their epoch, giving to each their share of the good and of the evil which they do. Now that share no one, except God, has the right to award from his own individual point of view. Those kings of Egypt who, at the moment when they passed into the unknown, were judged on the threshold of their tombs, were not judged by a man but by a People. That is why it is said "The judgment of a People is the judgment of God."

Historian, novelist, poet, dramatic author, we are nothing more than the foreman of a jury who impartially sums up the arguments and leaves the jury to give in their verdict. The Book is the summing up; the Readers, the jury.

This is why, having to paint one of the most gigantic figures not only of modern times but of all time; having to paint the epoch of his transition, that is to say the moment when Bonaparte made himself Napoleon, when the general transformed himself to emperor, — this is why, we say, in the fear of becoming unjust, we abandon interpretations and substitute facts.

We are not of those who think with Voltaire that "no one is a hero to his valet." It may be so when the valet is near-sighted or envious, — two infirmities that are more alike than persons think for. We maintain, ourselves, that a hero may or may not be a kind man, but that a kind man is none the less a hero for being kind. What is a hero in the eyes of the public? A man whose genius is momentarily greater than his heart. What is a hero in private life? A man whose heart is momentarily greater than his genius.

Historians, judge the genius!

People, judge the heart!

Who judged Charlemagne? The historians. Who judged Henri IV.? The people. Which do you consider the most righteously judged?

Well, in order to judge just judgment and compel the court of appeal, which is no other than posterity, to confirm contemporaneous verdicts, it is essential not to light up one side only of the figure we depict, but to walk round it, and wherever the sunlight does not reach to hold a torch, or even a candle.

Now, let us return to Bonaparte.

He was working, as we have said, with Bourrienne. Let us inquire into the usual division of the First Consul's time. He rose between seven and eight, and immediately called one of his secretaries, preferably Bourrienne, and worked with him till ten. At ten, breakfast was announced; Josephine, Hortense, and Eugène either waited or sat down to table with the family, that is, with the aides-de-camp on duty and Bourrienne. After breakfast he talked with the usual party or the invited guests if there were any; one hour was given to this intercourse, which was generally shared by the two brothers of the First Consul, Lucien and Joseph, Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Boulay (de la Meurthe), Monge, Berthollet, Laplace, Arnault, etc. Toward mid-day Cambacérès arrived. As a general thing, Bonaparte devoted half an hour to his chancellor; then suddenly, without warning, he would rise and say: —

"Au revoir, Josephine! au revoir, Hortense! Come, Bourrienne, let us go to work."

This speech, which recurred, almost regularly, in the same words every day at the same hour, was no sooner uttered than Bonaparte left the salon and shut himself up in his study. There no system of work was adopted; the subject taken up might be urgent or merely a caprice. Either Bonaparte dictated, or Bourrienne read notes or

despatches; after which the First Consul went to the council.

In the earlier months of the Consulate he was obliged to cross the courtyard of the little Luxembourg to reach the council-chamber, which, if the weather were rainy, put him in a bad humor; but toward the end of December, he had the courtyard covered, and from that time forth he almost always returned to his study singing. Bonaparte sang as false as Louis XV.

As soon as he was back in his study he examined the work he had ordered done, signed his letters, stretched himself out in an armchair, the arms of which he stabbed with his penknife as he talked. If he was not inclined to talk, he reread the letters of the night before or the pamphlets of the day, laughing at intervals with the good hearty laugh of a great child. Then suddenly, as if waking from a dream, he would spring to his feet, and cry out: —

"Write, Bourrienne."

Then he would sketch out the plan for some public building or for one of those vast projects which have astonished — let us rather say, have terrified the world.

At five o'clock they dined; after dinner the First Consul went up to Josephine's apartments, where he usually received the visits of the ministers, and particularly that of the minister of foreign affairs, M. de Talleyrand. At midnight, sometimes sooner, never later he gave the signal for retreat by saying brusquely: —

"Let us go to bed."

The next day, at seven in the morning, precisely the same life began over again, varied only by unforeseen incidents.

After these details on the daily habits of the mighty genius we are trying to show under his first aspect before the world, his personal portrait ought, we think, to come. Bonaparte, First Consul, has left fewer indications of his personal appearance than Napoleon the Emperor. Now,

as nothing less resembles the emperor of 1812 than the consul of 1800, let us endeavor, if possible, to sketch with a pen those features which the brush has never duly portrayed, that countenance which neither bronze nor marble has been able to render. Most of the painters and sculptors who flourished in this illustrious period of art, which could boast of Gros, David, Prud'hon, Girodet, Bosio, and such men, have endeavored to transmit to posterity the features of the man of destiny at the different epochs when the vast providential vistas which beckoned to him first revealed themselves. Thus, we have portraits of Bonaparte, commander-in-chief; Bonaparte, First Consul; Napoleon, emperor; and although some painters and sculptors have caught, more or less successfully, the type of his face, it may be said with truth that there does not exist of either the general, the First Consul, or the emperor, a single portrait or bust which perfectly resembles him.

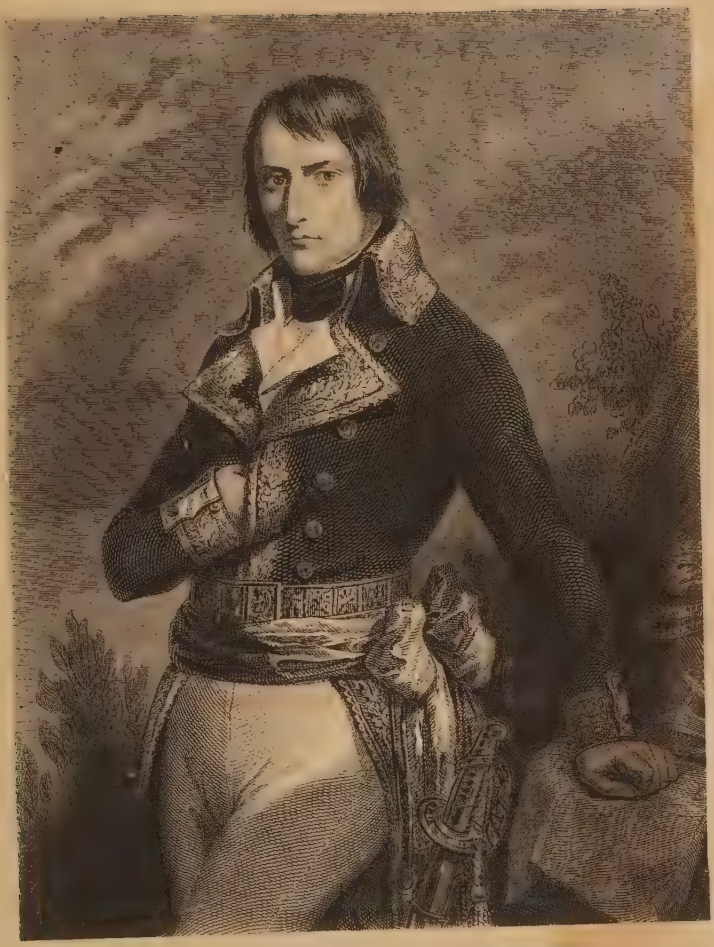
And the reason was this: It is not within the power of even genius to triumph over an impossibility. During the first period of Bonaparte's life it was possible to paint or chisel his protuberant skull, his forehead furrowed by the glorious lines of thought, his pale, elongated face, his granite complexion, and the meditative character of his countenance. During the second period of his life it was possible to paint or chisel his broadened forehead, his admirably defined eyebrows, his straight nose, his close-pressed lips, his chin modelled with a rare perfection, his whole face, in short, like a coin of Augustus; but that which neither bust nor portrait could render, which was banished utterly from the domain of imitation, was the nobility of his glance, his look, — the look that is to man what the lightning is to God, namely, the proof of his divinity.

In Bonaparte, that look obeyed his will with the rapidity of lightning; in one and the same minute it darted from his eyelids keen and piercing as the blade of a dagger

violently unsheathed, or soft as a sun-ray or a kiss, or stern as a challenge, terrible as a threat. Bonaparte had a look, a distinct look, for every thought that stirred his soul. In Napoleon, that look, except in the momentous circumstances of his life, ceased to be mobile and became fixed; but even so, it was none the less impossible to render it; it was a gimlet entering the heart of whomsoever he looked upon, the deepest, most secret thought of which he meant to pierce. Marble or painting might render the fixedness of that look, but neither the one nor the other could portray its life, — that is to say, its penetrating and magnetic action.

Bonaparte, even in the days of his leanness, had beautiful hands; he moved them with a certain coquetry. As he grew stouter his hands became superb; he took the utmost care of them, and looked at them when talking with much complacency. He felt the same satisfaction in his teeth, which were very handsome, though not with the splendor of the hands.

When he walked, either alone or with another person, whether in a room or in a garden, he always bent a little forward, as though his head were heavy to carry, and crossed his hands behind his back. He frequently made a little involuntary movement of the right shoulder as if a nervous shudder had passed through the flesh, and at the same instant his mouth made a curious movement from left to right. These motions had nothing convulsive about them, although the contrary has been said; they were simply a trick, indicative of great preoccupation, a sort of congestion of mind. It was chiefly observable at those periods when the general, the consul, or the emperor was maturing vast projects. It was after such promenades, accompanied by this two-fold motion of the shoulder and lips, that he dictated his most important notes. On a campaign with the army, on horseback, he was literally unfatigueable; but he was almost as much so in ordinary life, and would often walk five or six hours in



succession without perceiving it. When he walked thus with some one with whom he was familiar, he commonly passed his arm through that of his companion and leaned upon him.

Slender and thin as he was at the period when we place him before the eyes of our readers, he was much concerned by the fear of a future corpulence; it was to Bourrienne that he usually confided this singular dread.

"You see, Bourrienne," he would say, "how slim and abstemious I am; well, nothing can rid me of the idea that when I am forty I shall be a gross eater and very fat. I foresee that my constitution will undergo a change. I take exercise enough, but what of that? — it is a presentiment; and it won't fail to happen."

We all know to what obesity he attained when a prisoner at Saint Helena.

He had a positive passion for baths, which no doubt contributed not a little to make him fat; this passion became in the end an irresistible need. He took one every other day, and stayed in it two hours, during which time the journals and pamphlets of the day were read to him. As the water cooled he would turn the hot-water faucet until he raised the temperature of his bathroom to such a degree that the reader could neither bear it any longer nor see to read. Not until then would he suffer the door to be opened.

It is said that he was subject to epileptic fits after his first campaign in Italy, and especially during the period of which we are now writing. Bonaparte, general or First Consul, kept others awake, but he slept, and slept well, himself. He went to bed at midnight, sometimes earlier, as we have said, and when, at seven in the morning, they went into his room to waken him, he was almost invariably asleep. Usually, at the first call he rose; but sometimes, still half asleep, he would mutter: —

"Bourrienne, I beg of you, let me sleep a little longer."

Then, if there was nothing urgent on hand, Bourrienne

would return at eight o'clock; if it was otherwise, he insisted, and then with much grumbling Bonaparte would get up. He slept seven hours out of the twenty-four, sometimes eight, — taking a short siesta in the afternoon. He also gave particular instructions for the night.

"At night," he would say, "come into my room as seldom as you can; never wake me if you have good news to announce, — good news can wait; but if there is bad news wake me instantly. There 's no time to be lost in facing it."

As soon as Bonaparte had risen and made his morning ablutions, which were very thorough, his valet entered and brushed his hair and shaved him; while he was shaved a secretary or aide-de-camp read the newspapers aloud, always beginning with the "Moniteur." He gave no real attention to any but the English and German newspapers.

"Skip that," he would say, when they read him the French journals, "skip all that; I know what they say, because they only say what I choose."

As soon as he was dressed he went down to his study; and we have seen above what he did there. At ten o'clock breakfast was announced, which was always done by the steward in these words: "The general is served." No title, it will be observed, not even that of First Consul.

The meal was a frugal one. Every morning a dish was served which Bonaparte particularly liked, and he usually ate of it, — a chicken fried in oil with garlic; the same dish now called on the bills of fare at restaurants "poulet à la Marengo."

Bonaparte drank little, and then only Bordeaux or Burgundy, preferably the latter. After his breakfast and after his dinner he took a cup of *café noir;* never between his meals. When he chanced to work very late at night they brought him, not coffee but chocolate, and the secretary who worked with him had a cup of the same. Most historians, narrators, biographers, after saying that Bonaparte drank a great deal of coffee add that he took snuff to

excess. They are doubly mistaken. From the time he was twenty-four years of age Bonaparte had the habit of taking snuff; but only enough to keep his brain awake. He took it habitually, not, as biographers have declared, from the pocket of his waistcoat, but from a snuff-box, which he changed nearly every day for a new one, — having, in this matter of collecting snuff-boxes, a certain resemblance to the great Frederick. If he ever did take snuff from the pocket of his waistcoat it was on his battle days, when it would have been difficult, while riding at a gallop under fire, to hold both reins and snuff-box. For those days he had special waistcoats, with the right-hand pocket lined with leather, and as the sloping cut of his coat enabled him to insert his thumb and forefinger into this pocket without unbuttoning the coat, he could under any circumstances take his snuff as he pleased.

As general or First Consul he never wore gloves, contenting himself with holding and crumpling them in his left hand; as emperor, there was some advance in this propriety; he wore one glove, and as he changed his gloves not daily but two or three times a day, his valet took a habit of giving him alternate gloves; thus making one pair serve as two.

Bonaparte had two great passions, which Napoleon inherited, — for war, and for great architectural monuments to his fame.

Gay and almost noisy in camp, he was dreamy, even gloomy, in repose. To escape this gloom he had recourse to the electricity of Art, and saw visions of those gigantic monumental works of which he undertook so many and completed some. He knew that such works are part of the life of peoples; they are history written in majestic language, landmarks of the ages left standing long after the generations are swept away. He knew that Rome lives in her ruins, Greece speaks by her statues, that Egypt, splendid and mysterious spectre, appeared through her mighty monuments on the threshold of civilized existence.

What he loved above everything, what he hugged in preference to all else on earth, was renown, heroic uproar; hence his need of war, his thirst for glory. He often said: —

"A great reputation is a great noise; the louder it is, the farther it is heard. Laws, institutions, monuments, nations, all fall, but noise remains; it resounds through other generations. Babylon and Alexandria are fallen; Semiramis and Alexander stand erect, greater, perhaps, through the echo of their renown, waxing and multiplying from age to age, than they were in their lifetimes." Then he added, connecting his ideas with himself: "My power depends on my fame, and my fame on the battles I win; conquest made me what I am, conquest alone can sustain me. A new-born government must dazzle, must amaze. The moment it no longer flames it is burned out; when it ceases to soar it falls."

He was long a Corsican, impatient under the conquest of his native land; but after the 13th Vendémiaire he became a true Frenchman, and ended by loving France with actual passion. His dream was to see her great, happy, powerful, at the head of the nations in glory and in art. It is true that in making France great he became great with her, and attached his name for ever and aye to her grandeur. To him, living eternally in this thought, the present moment disappeared in the future; wherever the hurricane of war may have swept him, France, above all things else, above all other nations, filled his thoughts. "What will my Athenians think?" said Alexander, after Issus and Arbela. "I hope the French will be content with me," said Bonaparte, after Rivoli and the Pyramids.

Before a battle the modern Alexander gave little thought to what he should do in case of victory, but much in case of defeat. He was, more than any man, convinced that trifles often decide the greatest events; he was therefore more concerned in foreseeing such events than in producing them. He watched their coming to birth and their ripening; then, when the right time came, he appeared,

laid his hand on them, mastered and directed them, as an able rider masters and guides a horse.

His rapid rise in the midst of revolutions, the political changes he had brought about or seen accomplished, the events he had controlled had given him a certain contempt for men; moreover, he was not inclined by nature to think well of them; his lips were often heard to utter the grievous maxim, — all the more grievous because he personally knew its truth, — "There are two levers by which men are moved: fear, and self-interest."

With such opinions Bonaparte could not, and as a matter of fact did not, believe in friendship.

"Many a time," says Bourrienne, "he said to me, 'Friendship is only a word; I love no one, not even my brothers, — Joseph a little, possibly, but, even then, if I love him it is only from habit and because he is my elder. Duroc, well, yes, I love him; but why? Because his nature pleases me; he is cold, stern, resolute. I don't believe Duroc ever shed a tear. Besides, why should I love anybody? Do you think I have any true friends? As long as I am what I am, I shall have friends — apparently; but when my luck ceases you 'll see! — trees don't have leaves in winter. I tell you, Bourrienne, we should leave whimpering to women, it 's their business; as for me, no feelings, — a vigorous hand and a stout heart; if not, better let war and government alone.' "

In his familiar intercourse Bonaparte was what schoolboys call a tease; but his teasings were not spiteful, and were seldom unkind. His ill-humor, always easily roused, disappeared like a cloud driven by the wind; it evaporated in words and disappeared of its own will. Sometimes, however, when matters of public import were concerned and his lieutenants or ministers were to blame, he gave way to violent anger; his outbursts were then hard and cruel, often humiliating. He gave blows with a club under which, willingly or unwillingly, the recipient had to bow his head; witness his scene with Jomini, and that with Marshal Victor.

Bonaparte had two sets of enemies, the Jacobins and the royalists; he detested the first, and feared the second. When he spoke of the Jacobins he called them the murderers of Louis XVI.; as for the royalists, that was another thing; one might almost have thought he foresaw the Restoration. He had about him two men who had voted the death of the king: Fouché and Cambacérès. He dismissed Fouché, and if he kept Cambacérès it was because he wanted the services of that eminent legist; but he could not endure him, and sometimes he would catch his colleague the Second Consul by the ear and say: —

"My poor fellow, I 'm so sorry for you; if the Bourbons ever get back they 'll hang you."

One day Cambacérès lost his temper and with a twist of his head he pulled his ear from the living pincers which held it.

"Come," said he, "be done with your foolish joking!"

Whenever Bonaparte escaped any danger a childish habit, a Corsican habit, reappeared; he always made a rapid sign of the cross on his breast with his thumb.

When he met with any annoyance, or was haunted by some disagreeable thought he hummed — what air? an air of his own, which was no air at all; nobody ever recognized it for he sang so false. Then, still singing, he would sit down before his writing-table, swinging in his chair, tipping it back till it almost fell over, and mutilating, as we have said, its arms with a penknife which was put to that sole use, inasmuch as he never mended a pen himself; his secretaries were charged with that duty, and they mended them in the best manner possible, mindful of the fact that they would have to copy the terrific writing which we know of.

The effect produced on Bonaparte by the ringing of bells is well known. It was the only music he understood, and it went to his heart. If he was seated when the vibrations began he would hold up his hand for silence and lean toward the sound; if he was walking he would stop,

bend his head, and listen. As long as the bells rang he stood motionless; when the sound died away in space he resumed his walk, saying to those who asked him to explain this singular liking for the iron voice: —

"It reminds me of my first years at Brienne; I was happy then!"

At the period of which we are writing, his greatest personal interest was the purchase he had just made of the domain of Malmaison. He went there every Saturday night, like a schoolboy off for his holiday, and spent Sunday and often Monday there. Occasionally, and especially at first, he would ramble beyond the limits of the estate; but these excursions were thought dangerous by the police and were given up entirely after the conspiracy of Aréna and the affair of the infernal machine.

The revenue derived from Malmaison, calculated by Bonaparte himself on the supposition that he should sell his fruits and vegetables, did not amount to more than eight thousand francs.

"That 's not bad," he said to Bourrienne; "but," he added with a sigh, "one must have thirty thousand a year besides to be able to live here."

Bonaparte's taste for the country had a sort of poesy about it. He liked to see a woman with a tall and flexible figure gliding through the dusky shrubberies of the park; only, that woman must be dressed in white. He hated gowns of any dark color, and had a horror of stout women. As for pregnant women, he had such an aversion to them that it was very seldom he invited one to his fêtes. With little gallantry in his nature, too overbearing to attract, scarcely civil to a woman, it was rare for him to say, even to the prettiest, a pleasant thing; in fact he often produced a shudder at the things he did say, even to Josephine's best friends. To one he remarked: "Oh, how red your arms are!" To another, "What an ugly head-dress you are wearing!" To a third, "Your gown is dirty; I have seen you wear it twenty times;" or, "Why don't you change your dressmaker? You are dressed like a fright."

One day he said to the Duchesse de Chevreuse, a charming blonde whose beautiful hair was the admiration of every one: —

"It is queer how red your hair is!"

"Possibly," replied the duchess, "but this is the first time any man has told me so."

Bonaparte did not like cards; when he did happen to play it was always at vingt-et-un. He had one trait in common with Henri IV., — he cheated; but when the game was over he left all the gold and the notes he had won on the table saying: —

"You are ninnies! I have cheated the whole time we have been playing, and you never found it out. Those who have lost can take back their money."

Born and educated in the Catholic faith Bonaparte had no preference for any set of dogmas. When he re-established divine worship it was done as a political act, not a religious one. He was fond, however, of discussions bearing on religious matters; but he defined his own part in advance by saying: —

"My reason makes me a disbeliever in many things; but the impressions of my childhood and the inspirations of my youth fling me back into uncertainty."

Yet he never would hear of materialism; little he cared what the dogma was, provided it recognized a Creator. One fine evening in Messidor, on board the "Orient," as the ship was gliding along between the two-fold blue of sky and water, certain mathematicians who were with him declared there was no God, only animated matter. Bonaparte looked at the azure sky, a hundred times more vivid between Malta and Alexandria than it is in Europe, and at the moment when he was thought to be aloof from the conversation he exclaimed, pointing to the stars: —

"You may say what you please, but it was a God who made all that."

Bonaparte was very exact in paying his private debts, and just the reverse in paying the public expenses; he was

convinced that in all past transactions between ministers and purveyors or contractors, if the minister who made the bargain was not a dupe the State at any rate was robbed; for this reason he delayed the period of payment as long as possible; there were literally no evasions, no difficulties that he would not make, no bad reasons that he did not give. It was a fixed idea with him, an immutable principle, that every contractor was a cheat.

One day a man who had made a bid that was accepted was presented to him.

"What is your name?" he asked, with his accustomed brusqueness.

"Vollant, citizen First Consul.

"Good name for a contractor."

"I spell it with two *l's*, citizen."

"To rob the better," rejoined Bonaparte, turning his back upon him.

Bonaparte seldom changed any of his decisions, even when he saw they were unjust. No one ever heard him say, "I was mistaken;" on the contrary, his favorite saying was: "I always begin by believing the worst," — a maxim more worthy of Timon than of Augustus.

But with all this, it is impossible to help feeling that there was more of a desire in Bonaparte's mind to seem to despise men than an actual contempt for them. He was neither vindictive nor malignant. Sometimes, it is true, he allowed too much power to Necessity, that goddess with iron screws; but take him away from his policy, and he was kind, not unfeeling, accessible to pity, fond of children (great proof of a kind and pitying heart), full of indulgence for human weaknesses, and sometimes of a good-humored heartiness like that of Henri IV. playing with his children in presence of the Spanish ambassador.

If we were writing history we should have many more things to say here of Bonaparte, without counting those which — after finishing with Bonaparte — we should still have to say about Napoleon. But we are writing a simple

narrative, in which Bonaparte merely plays a part; unfortunately, wherever Bonaparte shows himself, if only for a moment, he becomes, in spite of the narrator, a principal personage.

The reader must pardon us, therefore, for having fallen into this digression; that man, who is a world in himself, has, against our will, swept us along in his whirlwind.

Let us return to Roland, and consequently to our legitimate tale.

X.

THE AMBASSADOR.

We have seen that Roland asked for the First Consul the moment he returned to the Luxembourg, and was told that he was engaged with Fouché.

Roland was a privileged individual; no matter who was with Bonaparte, he was in the habit, on his return from a journey or merely from an errand, of half opening the door of the study and putting in his head. The First Consul was often so busy that he paid no attention to the head. When this was the case Roland would say, "General!" which meant, in the close understanding which the two schoolmates still kept up together: "General, I 'm here; do you want me? I 'm at your orders." If the First Consul did not want him he replied, "Very good;" if, on the contrary, he did want him he simply said, "Come in." Then Roland would enter and wait in the recess of a window until the general told him what he wanted.

On this occasion, Roland put his head in as usual saying: "General!"

"Come in," replied the First Consul, with visible satisfaction; "come in, come in!"

Roland entered. Bonaparte was, as he had been told, working with the minister of police. The affair on which they were engaged, and which seemed to absorb the First Consul a good deal, had an interest for Roland as well. It concerned the robberies of the diligences by The Company of Jehu.

On the table lay three *procès-verbaux* relating to the stoppage of one diligence and two mail-coaches. In one of the latter was the paymaster of the Army of Italy,

Triber. These stoppages had occurred, one on the high-road from Meximieux to Montluel, in that part of the road which crosses the township of Beligneux; the second, at the extremity of the lake of Silans, on the side toward Nantua; the third, on the high-road from St. Étienne to Bourg, at a spot called Les Carronnières.

A curious fact was connected with one of these stoppages. A sum of four thousand francs and a case of jewelry had been mixed up with the bags of money belonging to the government. Their owners had thought them lost, when the justice of peace of Nantua received an unsigned letter telling him of a place where the money and the jewels were buried, and requesting him to return them to their rightful owners; because, the letter went on to say, The Company of Jehu made war upon the government, and not upon private individuals.

In another case, that of Les Carronnières, the robbers, in order to stop the coach which passed on rapidly, not heeding their command to stop, were forced to fire at a horse; the Companions of Jehu felt themselves bound to make good that loss to the postmaster, who accordingly received five hundred francs in payment for his dead horse. This was just what the horse had cost a week before; proving that the robbers, whoever they were, had knowledge of the fact.

Bonaparte sat singing that mysterious tune we have mentioned; which showed that he was furiously angry. So, as Roland might be expected to bring him fresh news on the subject, he called to him three times to come in.

"Well," he said, "so your part of the country is in downright revolt against me; look at that."

Roland cast an eye on the papers and understood at once.

"Exactly," he said. "I came to speak of all that, general."

"Then begin at once; but first, go and ask Bourrienne for my department atlas."

Roland fetched the atlas, and guessing what Bonaparte desired to look at, he opened it at the department of the Ain.

"That 's it," said Bonaparte; "show me where these affairs took place."

Roland put his finger at the edge of the map on the Lyon side.

"There, general, that 's the exact place of the first attack, near the village of Belignieux."

"And the second?"

"Here," said Roland, pointing to the other side of the department, toward Geneva; "there 's the lake of Nantua, and here 's that of Silans."

"Now, the third?"

Roland laid his finger on the centre of the map.

"General, there 's the exact place. Les Carronnières are not marked, on account of their slight importance."

"What are Les Carronnières?" asked the First Consul.

"General, in our part of the country they call manufactories of tiles *carronnières;* they belong to citizen Terrier. That 's the place they ought to be in on the map."

And Roland made a pencil-mark on the paper to show the spot.

"Why, that 's less than a mile from Bourg!" said Bonaparte.

"Scarcely that, general; and this explains why the wounded horse was taken back to Bourg and died in the stables of the Belle-Alliance."

"Do you hear all that, citizen?" said Bonaparte, addressing Fouché.

"Yes, citizen First Consul," answered the latter.

"You know that I wish brigandage to cease?"

"I shall use every effort —"

"It is not a question of your efforts, but of the thing being done."

The minister bowed.

"It is only on that condition," continued Bonaparte,

"that I shall admit that you are the able man you pretend to be."

"I 'll help you, citizen," said Roland.

"I did not venture to ask your help," said the minister.

"Yes, but I offer it; don't do anything that we have not planned together."

Fouché looked at Bonaparte.

"That 's quite right," said Bonaparte; "you can go. Roland will follow you to the ministry."

Fouché bowed and left the room.

"Now," continued the First Consul, "it concerns your honor, Roland, to exterminate those bandits. In the first place, the thing is being carried on in your department; and next, they seem to have some particular spite against you and your family."

"On the contrary," said Roland, — "and that is what makes me so furious, — they take pains to spare me and my family."

"Let us go over the matter, Roland. Every detail is of importance; it is a war of Bedouins over again."

"Just notice this, general. I spent a night in the Chartreuse of Seillon because I was told there were ghosts there. Sure enough, a ghost did come, but a perfectly inoffensive one. I fired at him twice; he never even turned round. My mother was in a diligence which was stopped, and fainted away. One of the robbers paid her the most delicate attentions, bathed her temples with vinegar, and gave her smelling-salts. My brother Édouard fought them as best he could; they took him in their arms and kissed him and made him all sorts of compliments on his courage; a little more and they would have given him sugar-plums for his gallant conduct. Now, just the reverse, observe this: my friend Sir John Tanlay did just as I did, went where I went; they treated him as a spy and stabbed him, as they thought, to death."

"He did n't die?"

"No; on the contrary he is so well that he wants to marry my sister."

"Ah, ha! has he asked for her?"

"Officially."

"And you answered?"

"I answered that the matter depended on two persons."

"You and your mother, that 's all right."

"No; on my sister herself — and you."

"Your sister I understand; but me?"

"Did n't you tell me, general, that you took charge of marrying her?"

Bonaparte walked up and down the room, his arms crossed, reflecting; then suddenly stopping short before Roland, he said: —

"What sort of fellow is your Englishman?"

"You have seen him, general."

"I don't mean physically; all Englishmen are alike — blue eyes, red hair, white skin, and long jaws."

"That 's their *th*," said Roland, gravely.

"Their *th*?"

"Yes; did you ever learn English, general?"

"I tried to learn it."

"Your teacher must have told you that their *th* was sounded by pressing the tongue against the teeth. Well, by dint of pushing their teeth with their tongues the English have ended by getting those elongated jaws, which, as you said just now, are one of the distinctive characteristics of their physiognomy."

Bonaparte looked at Roland to see if that incorrigible jester were laughing or speaking seriously. Roland was imperturbable.

"Is that your own opinion?" said Bonaparte.

"Yes, general; and I think that physiologically it is as good as any other. I have a crowd of opinions just like it which I bring to light when occasion offers."

"Let us get back to your Englishman."

"Certainly, general."

"I asked you what sort of man he was."

"Well, first, he is a gentleman; very brave, very calm,

very impassible, very noble, very rich, and moreover — which may not be a recommendation to you — a nephew of Lord Grenville, prime minister of his Britannic Majesty."

"What 's that?"

"I said, prime minister of his Britannic Majesty."

Bonaparte resumed his walk; presently returning to Roland, —

"Can I see your Englishman?" he said.

"You know, general, you can do anything."

"Where is he?"

"In Paris."

"Go and find and bring him here to me."

Roland was in the habit of obeying without reply; he took his hat and went toward the door.

"Send Bourrienne here," said the First Consul, just as Roland passed into the secretary's room. Five minutes later Bourrienne appeared.

"Sit down there, Bourrienne," said the First Consul, "and write."

Bourrienne sat down, arranged his paper, dipped his pen in the ink, and waited.

"Ready?" asked the First Consul, sitting down upon the writing-table; which was another of his habits; a habit which often reduced his secretary to despair; for Bonaparte never ceased swinging himself forward and back all the time he dictated, — a motion which shook the table much as if it had been in the middle of the Atlantic over a heaving sea.

"I 'm ready," replied Bourrienne, who had ended by forcing himself to endure, with more or less patience, all Bonaparte's eccentricities.

"Then write." And he dictated: —

"Bonaparte, First Consul of the Republic, to his Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland:

"Called by the will of the French nation to the chief magistracy of the Republic, I think it proper to inform your Majesty personally of this fact.

"Must the war which for two years has ravaged the four quarters of the globe be perpetuated? Is there no means of staying it?

"How is it that two nations, the most enlightened of Europe, both stronger and more powerful than their own safety and independence require, how is it that they sacrifice to ideas of empty grandeur or to bigoted antipathies the welfare of commerce, the prosperity of homes, the happiness of families? How is it that they do not recognize that peace is the first of needs and the first of a nation's glories?

"These sentiments cannot be foreign to the heart of a king who governs a free nation with the sole object of rendering it happy.

"Your Majesty will see in this overture my sincere desire to contribute efficaciously, for the second time, to a general pacification by an advance frankly made and free of those formalities which, necessary as they may be to disguise the dependence of feeble States, only disclose in powerful nations a mutual intention to deceive.

"France and England can, for a long time yet, by an abuse of their powers and to the misery of their peoples, carry on the struggle without exhaustion; but, and I dare to say it, the fate of all civilized nations depends on the conclusion of a war which involves the universe."

Bonaparte paused.

"I think it will do," he said. "Read it over, Bourrienne."

Bourrienne read the letter he had just written. After each paragraph the First Consul nodded and said, "Go on." Before the last words were fairly uttered he took the paper from Bourrienne's hand and signed it with a new pen. It was a habit of his never to use a pen twice; nothing was more disagreeable to him than a spot of ink on his fingers.

"That's done," he said; "seal it, and put the address: 'To the Earl of Grenville.'"

Bourrienne did as he was told. At the same moment the noise of a carriage was heard entering the courtyard of the Luxembourg; and an instant later the door opened and Roland entered.

"Well?" said Bonaparte.

"Did n't I tell you you could have everything you chose, general?"

"Have you brought your Englishman?"

"I met him in the place de Buci, and knowing that you don't like to wait for anything, I caught him just as he was and made him get into the carriage. Faith! I thought I should have to drive round to the rue Mazarin and get a corporal's guard to bring him; he is in boots and a frock-coat."

"Let him come in," said Bonaparte.

"Come in, Sir John," said Roland, looking back.

Sir John Tanlay appeared on the threshold. Bonaparte had only to cast a glance at him to recognize a perfect gentleman. A trifle of emaciation, a slight remaining pallor gave to Sir John's fine physical appearance the characteristics of distinction. He bowed, awaiting his formal presentation, like the Englishman that he was.

"General," said Roland, "I have the honor to present to you Sir John Tanlay, who proposed to go to the third cataract for the purpose of seeing you, but who has to-day obliged me to drag him by the ear to the Luxembourg."

"Come in, Sir John, come in," said Bonaparte; "it is not the first time that we have met, nor the first time I have expressed the wish to know you; there is, therefore, positive ingratitude in trying to evade my desire."

"If I hesitated, general," said Sir John, in excellent French, "it was because I could scarcely believe in the honor you do me."

"And besides, very naturally and from national feeling, you detest me, don't you, like the rest of your countrymen?"

"I must confess, general," replied Sir John, smiling, "that my countrymen have not got beyond admiration."

"And do you share the absurd prejudice of believing that national honor requires you to hate to-day the enemy who may be your friend to-morrow?"

"France is to me almost a second native land, general, and my friend Roland will tell you that I aspire to the moment when, of my two countries, the one to which I shall owe the happiness of my life will be France."

"In that case you ought to see France and England shaking hands for the good of the world without repugnance."

"The day when I see that will be a happy day for me."

"If you can contribute to bring it about will you do so?"

"I would risk my life to do it."

"Roland tells me you are a relative of Lord Grenville."

"I am his nephew."

"Are you on good terms with him?"

"He was very fond of my mother, his eldest sister."

"Have you inherited that fondness?"

"Yes; only, I think he holds it in reserve till I return to England."

"Will you take charge of a letter for me?"

"To whom?"

"King George III."

"I shall feel greatly honored."

"And will you undertake to say to your uncle that which cannot be written in a letter?"

"Yes, without change of words; the words of General Bonaparte are history."

"Very good; then say to him —" Interrupting himself, Bonaparte turned to Bourrienne. "Bourrienne," he said, "find me the last letter from the Emperor of Russia."

Bourrienne opened a box, and, without searching, laid his hand on a letter, which he handed to Bonaparte.

The First Consul cast his eye over the paper and gave it to Sir John, saying: —

"Tell him first, and before all else, that you have read that letter."

Sir John bowed and read as follows: —

Citizen First Consul, — I have received, each man armed and newly clothed in the uniform of his regiment, the nine thousand Russians made prisoners in Holland, whom you have returned to me without exchange, ransom, or condition of any kind.

This is pure chivalry, and I boast of being chivalrous. I think

that what I can best offer you, citizen First Consul, in exchange for this magnificent gift, is my friendship. Will you accept it?

As an earnest of this friendship I am sending his passports to Lord Whitworth, the British ambassador to Petersburg.

If you will be, I will not say my second, but my witness, I will challenge personally every king who will not take part against England and close his ports to her. I begin with my neighbor, the king of Denmark, and you will find in the "Gazette de la Cour" the ultimatum I have sent him.

What more can I say to you? Nothing, unless it be that you and I together can give laws to the world.

I am your admirer and sincere friend,

PAUL.

Sir John turned to the First Consul.

"You know, of course," he said, "that the Emperor of Russia is mad."

"Does that letter convince you of it?" asked Bonaparte.

"No, but it confirms my opinion."

"It was a madman who gave Henry VI. of Lancaster the crown of Saint-Louis, and the blazon of England still bears — until I scratch them out with my sword — the *fleurs-de lis* of France."

Sir John smiled; his national pride revolted at this assumption in the conqueror of the Pyramids.

"But," said Bonaparte, "that's not the question now; everything in its own time."

"Yes," murmured Sir John, "we are too near Aboukir."

"Oh, I shall never defeat you at sea," said Bonaparte, — "it would take fifty years to make France a maritime nation, — but, over there!" and he motioned with his hand to the East. "At the present moment, however, I repeat that the question is not war, but peace. I need peace, and especially peace with England, to accomplish a dream I have. You see, I play above-board; I am strong enough to speak frankly. If the day ever comes when a diplomatist tells the truth, he will be the greatest statesman in the world; for no one will believe him, and he will attain, unopposed, his ends."

"Then I am to say to my uncle that you desire peace?"

"All the while letting him know that I do not shrink from war. If I cannot ally myself with King George, I can, as you see, be friends with the Emperor Paul; but Russia has not reached that point of civilization which I desire in an ally."

"An ally is sometimes less useful than a tool."

"Yes; but, as you said just now, the Emperor is mad, and it is better to disarm a madman than to arm him. I tell you that two nations like France and England ought to be inseparable friends or relentless enemies; friends, they are the poles of the world, balancing its movements with perfect equilibrium; enemies, one must destroy the other and turn the world on his sole axis."

"But if Lord Grenville, not doubting your genius, doubts your power; if he holds the opinion of our poet Campbell that Britannia needs no bulwark, no towers along her steep, what shall I tell him?"

"Unroll the map of the world, Bourrienne," said Bonaparte.

Bourrienne unrolled a map; Bonaparte went up to it.

"Do you see those two rivers?" he said, showing the Volga and the Danube to Sir John. "That's the road to India," he added.

"I thought Egypt was," said Sir John.

"So did I for a time; or rather, I took it because I had no other. But the Czar opens this one to me; your government can force me to take it. Do you follow me?"

"Yes, citizen; go on."

"Well, if England forces me to fight her, and I am obliged to accept the alliance of Catherine's successor, this is what I shall do: I shall embark forty thousand Russians on the Volga; I shall send them down that river to Astrakan; they will cross the Caspian and await me at Asterabad."

Sir John bowed in sign of deep attention. Bonaparte continued: —

"I embark forty thousand Frenchmen on the Danube; I

find Russian vessels at its mouth, ready to transport them to Taganrog; I march them by land along the course of the Don to Pratisbianskaïa, whence they move to Tzaritsin; there they descend the Volga in the same vessels which have just transported the forty thousand Russians to Asterabad; fifteen days later I have eighty thousand men in Western Persia. From Asterabad, these united corps will march to the Indus; Persia, the enemy of England, is our natural ally."

"Yes, but once in the Punjab, the Persian alliance will do you no good; and an army of eighty thousand men cannot drag its provisions along with it."

"You forget one thing," said Bonaparte, as if the expedition were already under way; "I have left bankers at Teheran and Cabul. Now, remember what happened nine years ago in Lord Cornwallis's war with Tippoo Saïb: the commander-in-chief fell short of provisions, and a simple captain — I forget his name —"

"Captain Malcolm," said Sir John.

"That 's it!" cried Bonaparte. "Ah, you know the story! Well Captain Malcolm had recourse to the Brinjaries, those Bohemians of India, who cover the whole peninsula with their encampments and control all the grain supplies. Very good; those Bohemians are, to all who pay them, absolutely faithful to the last penny; they will feed me."

"You must cross the Indus."

"What of that?" said Bonaparte. "I have a hundred and twenty miles of bank between Déra-Ismaël-Khan and Attok to choose from; I know the Indus as I do the Seine; it is a slow current, flowing about three miles an hour; its medium depth at that point is from twelve to fifteen feet, and there are ten or more fords right on the line of my operations."

"So your line is already traced out?" asked Sir John, smiling.

"Yes, in so far as that it follows a broad, uninterrupted stretch of fertile, well-watered provinces; that I avoid the

sandy plains which separate the lower valley of the Indus from Rajputana; and in so far also as that I follow the general bases of all invasions of India that have had any success from Mahmud of Ghazni in the year 1000 to Nadir Shah in 1739. And do you know how many between those two epochs have taken the route I mean to take? Let us count them. After Mahmud of Ghazni, came Mohammed Ghori in 1184 with one hundred and twenty thousand men; after him, Timur Lang, or Timur the Lame, whom we call Tamerlane, with sixty thousand men; after Tamerlane, Babar; after Babar, Humajun, and how many more I can't remember. Why, the Indus is there for whoever will go and take it!"

"You forget, citizen First Consul, that all the conquerors you have mentioned had only the aboriginal populations to deal with, whereas you will have to meet the English. We hold India —"

"With twenty-two thousand men."

"And a hundred thousand Sepoys."

"I have counted everything, and I regard England and India, — one with the respect, the other with the contempt, they deserve. Wherever I find European infantry, I prepare a second, a third, if need be, a fourth line of reserves, believing that the first might possibly give way before the British bayonets; but wherever I find Sepoys, I need only postilion's-whips to scatter the rabble. Have you any other questions to put to me, Sir John?"

"One, citizen First Consul: are you sincerely desirous of peace?"

"Here's the letter in which I ask it of your king, and it is to be quite sure that this letter reaches his Britannic Majesty's own hand that I ask Lord Grenville's nephew to convey it."

"It shall be done, citizen; and I wish I were the uncle, rather than the nephew, that I might promise more."

"When can you start?"

"In an hour I shall be gone."

"You have no wish to express to me before you go?"

"None. In any case, if I had any, I leave all my affairs to my good friend, Roland."

"Shake hands with me, Sir John; it will be a good omen, as you represent England and I France."

Sir John accepted the honor done him by Bonaparte with the exact measure of cordiality that indicated both his sympathy for France and his mental reserves for the honor of his own nation. Then having grasped Roland's hand with brotherly effusion, he bowed again to the First Consul and left the room.

Bonaparte followed him with his eyes and seemed to be reflecting; then he said suddenly: —

"Roland, I not only consent to your sister's marriage with Sir John Tanlay, but I wish it. You understand? I wish it."

And he laid such emphasis on those three words that to any one who knew him they signified plainly, not "I wish," but "I will."

The tyranny was sweet to Roland; and he accepted it with grateful thanks.

XI.

THE TWO SIGNALS.

Let us now relate what happened at the château des Noires-Fontaines three days after the events we have just related took place in Paris.

Since the successive departures, first of Roland, then of Madame de Montrevel and Édouard, and finally of Sir John after his recovery, Amélie had remained alone with her maid Charlotte at the château. We say *alone*, because Michel and his son Jacques did not live in the house, but in the little lodge at the gates, where Michel added the duties of porter to those of gardener.

It therefore happened that at night all the windows excepting those of Amélie on the first floor overlooking the garden and that of Charlotte in the attic, were left in darkness. Madame de Montrevel had taken with her the second chambermaid. The two young girls might naturally have felt rather isolated in their part of the house, which contained a dozen bedrooms on three floors, more especially at a time when so many rumors of robberies on the high-roads reached them. Michel therefore proposed to his young mistress to sleep in the main building so as to be near her in case of need. But she, in a firm voice, assured him that she felt no fear, and desired no change in the customary habits of the household. Michel did not insist, and retired saying that Mademoiselle might, in any case, sleep in peace, for he and Jacques would each make rounds of the château during the night.

Amélie seemed anxious at first about these rounds, but she soon noticed that Michel and Jacques contented them-

selves with watching at the edge of the forest; and the frequent appearance of a jugged hare or a haunch of venison on the dinner-table proved to her that Michel kept his word in one direction. She therefore ceased to trouble herself about Michel's "rounds," which were always on the side of the house opposite to that where she feared them.

Now as we have said, three days after the events just related, or to speak more correctly, during the night which followed the third day, those who were accustomed to see no light except in Amélie's windows on the first floor and in that of Charlotte on the third, might have observed with surprise from eleven o'clock till midnight that four windows on the first floor were illuminated. It is true that each was lighted by a single candle. They might also have seen the figure of a young girl, looking anxiously in the direction of the village of Ceyzeriat.

This young girl was Amélie, pale, breathing with difficulty, and seeming to watch anxiously for a signal.

At the end of a few minutes she wiped her forehead and drew a joyous breath. A fire was lighted in the direction to which she looked. Then she passed from room to room, putting out, one after the other, three candles, leaving only the one which was burning in her own room. As if the fire had awaited this return signal, it was now extinguished.

Amélie sat down beside her window, and remained motionless, her eyes fixed on the garden. It was a dark night, without moon or stars, and yet at the end of about half an hour she saw, or she divined, a shadow crossing the lawn and approaching the château. She placed her single candle at the farthest end of the room and returned to open the window.

The friend she was awaiting was already on the balcony. As on the first night when we saw him climb it, he put his arm about the waist of the young girl and drew her into the room. She made a slight resistance, felt with her hand for the cord of the Venetian blind, unfastened it from the hook that held it, and let it fall with more noise than prudence would have counselled.

Behind the blind she closed the window; then she went to fetch the candle from the corner where she had hidden it. The light illuminated her face, and the young man gave a cry of alarm, for he saw that it was covered with tears.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"A great misfortune," answered the young girl.

"Oh, I feared it when I saw the signal by which you recalled me. But tell me, is it irreparable?"

"Almost," replied Amélie.

"I hope, at least, that it only threatens me?"

"It threatens us both."

The young man passed his hand over his brow.

"Tell me," he said, "I am strong, you know."

"If you have strength to hear it," she said, "I have none to tell it." Then, taking a letter from the chimney-piece, she added, "Read that; see what I received by the post to-night."

The young man took the letter, opened it, and looked at the signature.

"From Madame de Montrevel," he said.

"Yes, with a postscript from Roland."

The young man read: —

My dearest Daughter, — I hope that the news I announce will give you as much happiness as it has already given to our dear Roland and to me. Sir John Tanlay, whose heart you doubted, declaring that it was only a mechanical contrivance, manufactured in a workshop, admits that such an opinion was a just one until the day when he saw you; but he insists that since that day, he has a heart, and that his heart adores you.

This morning, while breakfasting with your brother, he formally asked your hand. Roland received the offer with joy, but he has as yet made him no promises. The First Consul had already spoken, before Roland started for La Vendée, of making himself responsible for your establishment. But since then he has asked to see Sir John, and has seen him, and Sir John, though he maintained his national dignity, was taken into the First Consul's good graces at once to such a degree that he received from him, at their first interview, a mission to his uncle, Lord Grenville. Sir John started for England immedi-

ately. I do not know how many days he will be absent, but on his return he is certain to ask permission to present himself to you as your betrothed. Sir John Tanlay is still young, pleasing in appearance, and enormously rich; he is highly connected in England; and Roland's friend. I do not know a man who has more right, I will not say to your love, my dear Amélie, but to your profound esteem.

The rest of my news I can tell you in two words. The First Consul is still most kind to me and the two brothers, and Madame Bonaparte has let me know that she only awaits your marriage to place you near her.

There is some talk of their moving from the Luxembourg. Do you understand the full meaning of that change of domicile?

Your mother, who loves you,

CLOTILDE DE MONTREVEL.

Without taking his eyes from the paper the young man turned to Roland's postscript; it was as follows: —

You have read, my dear little sister, what our good mother has written. This marriage is a suitable one under all aspects. It is not a thing to be coy about; the First Consul *wishes* you to become Lady Tanlay; that is to say, he *wills* it. I am leaving Paris for a few days. Though you may not see me, you will hear of me. I kiss you.

ROLAND.

"Well, Charles," said Amélie when the young man had finished the letter, "what do you think of that?"

"I think it is a thing we had to expect some day or other, my poor angel; but it is none the less terrible."

"What is to be done?"

"There are but three things to do."

"Tell me."

"In the first place, resist, if you have the strength; it is the shortest and the surest way."

Amélie lowered her head.

"You will never dare, will you?"

"Never."

"And yet you are my wife, Amélie; a priest has blessed our union."

"But they say that marriage before a priest is null before the law."

"Is it not enough for you, the wife of a proscribed man?" said Morgan, his voice trembling as he spoke.

Amélie had an impulse to fling herself into his arms.

"But my mother!" she said; "our marriage did not have her presence and blessing."

"Because there were too many risks to run, and we wished to run them alone."

"But think, Charles, — General Bonaparte! Did you notice that Roland says he *wills it?*"

"Oh! if you love me, Amélie, you will show that man that he may change the face of the State, carry war from one end of the world to the other, make laws, build himself a throne, but that he cannot force the lips to say yes when the heart says no."

"If I love you!" said Amélie in a tone of soft reproach. "It is midnight, you are here in my room, I weep in your arms, — I, the daughter of General de Montrevel, and Roland's sister, — and you say to me, 'If you love me'!"

"I was wrong, I was wrong, my darling Amélie. Yes, I know you were brought up in adoration of that man; you cannot understand that any one should resist him, and whoever does resist him is in your eyes a rebel."

"Charles, you said there were three ways of acting; what is the second?"

"Accept apparently the marriage they propose to you, but gain time by delaying it under various pretexts. The man is not immortal."

"No; but he is too young for us to rely upon his death. The third way, dear friend?"

"Fly, — but to that last resource, my Amélie, there are two objections: first, your repugnance."

"I am yours, Charles; I surmount my repugnance."

"And then," added the young man, "my engagements."

"Your engagements?"

"My companions are bound to me, Amélie, and I am

bound to them. We, too, have a man to whom we have sworn obedience, — the future king of France. If you accept the devotion of your brother to Bonaparte, accept ours to Louis XVIII."

Amélie let her face drop into her hands with a heavy sigh.

"Then," she said, "we are lost."

"Why so? Under various pretexts, your health above all, you can gain a year. Before the year is out Bonaparte will be forced to begin another war, in Italy probably. A single defeat will destroy his prestige; in short, in a year a great many things may happen."

"Did you read Roland's postscript, Charles?"

"Yes; but I did n't see anything that was not in your mother's letter."

"Read the last paragraph again."

And Amélie placed the letter before him. He read: "I am leaving Paris for several days; though you may not see me, you will hear of me. Well, what of that?"

"Don't you see what that means?"

"No."

"It means that Roland is in pursuit of you."

"What does that matter? You know he cannot die by the hand of any of us."

"But you, oh, my dear one, you may die by his!"

"Do you think I should care so very much if he killed me, Amélie?"

"Oh! I have never thought of that in my gloomiest moments."

"So you think your brother has started in quest of us."

"I feel certain of it."

"What makes you certain?"

"He swore over Sir John's body when he thought him dead, to avenge him on you and your companions."

"If that Englishman had only died when he seemed dying," exclaimed the young man, bitterly, "we should not be where we are now, Amélie."

"God saved him, Charles; it was therefore good that he did not die."

"Good for us?"

"I cannot fathom the ways of God. I tell you, my beloved Charles, beware of Roland; Roland is close by."

Charles smiled incredulously.

"I tell you that he is not only very near us, but he has been seen here."

"Who saw him?"

"Charlotte, my maid, the daughter of the jailer. She asked my permission to go and see her parents yesterday; you were coming, so I told her she could stay there till this morning."

"Well?"

"She therefore passed the night in Bourg, with her parents. At eleven o'clock the captain of the gendarmerie brought in some prisoners. While they were locking them up, a man arrived wrapped in a cloak and asked for the captain. Charlotte thought she heard the voice of the new arrival; she looked at him attentively, and at a moment when his cloak dropped a little she recognized my brother."

The young man made a movement.

"Now do you understand, Charles? My brother comes here to Bourg, mysteriously, without letting me know; he asks for the captain of the gendarmerie, follows him into the prison, speaks only to him, and departs. Is it not alarming for us? — tell me, Charles!"

As Amélie spoke a dark cloud seemed to spread little by little over her lover's face.

"Amélie," he said, "when my companions and I bound ourselves together as you know we did, we were none of us deceived as to the risks we ran."

"But at least," said Amélie, anxiously, "you have changed your meeting-place; you have given up the Chartreuse of Seillon, have you not?"

"None but our dead are there now."

"Is the grotto of Ceyzeriat perfectly safe?"

"As safe as any refuge which has two exits."

"The Chartreuse of Seillon had two exits, yet you left your dead there."

"The dead are in greater safety than the living; they are sure not to die on the scaffold."

Amélie felt a shudder go through her.

"Charles!" she murmured.

"Listen," said the young man; "God knows, and you too, that I have always put laughter and gayety between your presentiments and my fears; but to-day the aspect of things has changed; we are coming face to face with a crisis. Whatever the end may be, it is approaching. I do not ask of you, my Amélie, those selfish unreasonable things which lovers in danger of death exact from their mistresses; I do not ask you to bind your heart to a dead man, your love to a corpse —"

"Friend," said the young girl, laying her hand upon his arm, "take care; you are doubting me."

"No; I do you the highest honor in leaving you free to carry out the sacrifice to its fullest extent; but I will not suffer you to be bound by an oath; no tie shall fetter you."

"So be it," said Amélie.

"What I ask of you," continued the young man, "and I ask you to swear it on our love, which has been, alas! so fatal to you, is this: if I am arrested and disarmed, imprisoned and condemned to death, I implore you, Amélie, nay, I exact that in some way you will send me arms, not only for myself, but for any companions who may be with me, so that we may be still masters of our lives."

"But in such a case, Charles, may I not tell all? May I not appeal to my brother's tenderness, to the generosity of the First Consul?"

"Amélie," he said, "it is no longer one promise I ask of you, there are now two. Swear to me, in the first place, and above all else, that you will never solicit my pardon. Swear it, Amélie, swear it!"

"Need I swear it?" said the girl, bursting into tears, "I promise it."

"Promise it on the hour when I said I loved you, on the hour when you answered that I was loved!"

"On your life, on mine, on the past, on the future, on our happiness, on our tears."

"I should die in any case, but without that promise — do you not see, my Amélie? — I should die dishonored."

"I promise it, Charles."

"Then for my other request: if we are taken and condemned, send me arms,— arms or poison, the means of dying, any means. Coming from you, death would be another joy."

"Far or near, free or a prisoner, living or dead, you are my master, I am your slave; order, and I obey."

"That is all, my Amélie; it is plain and simple: no pardon, but the means of death."

"Yes, plain and simple, but terrible."

"You will do it, will you not?"

"You insist?"

"I implore you."

"Order or entreaty, Charles, your will shall be done."

The girl seemed almost fainting, and the young man passed his left arm round her and approached his mouth to hers. As their lips were about to touch an owl's cry was heard, so close to the window that Amélie started back in fear and Charles raised his head. The cry was heard a second time, then a third.

"Ah!" murmured Amélie, "do you hear that bird of ill-omen? We are doomed, my friend."

But Charles shook his head.

"That is not an owl, Amélie," he said; "it is the call of one of our Company. Put out the light."

Amélie did so while her lover unfastened the window.

"Even here!" she murmured, "do they seek you even here?"

"It is only our friend, our confidant, the Comte de Jayat; no one else knows I am here." Then, leaning from the balcony, he asked: —

"Is it you, Montbar?"

"Yes; is it you, Morgan?"

"Yes."

A man issued from a clump of trees.

"News from Paris," he said,— "not a moment to lose; a matter of life and death to all of us."

"You hear him, Amélie?"

Taking the young girl in his arms, he pressed her convulsively to his heart.

"Go," she said in a faint voice, "go; did you not hear him say it was a matter of life or death for all of you?"

"Farewell, my Amélie, my dear, my beloved, farewell!"

"Oh, no! not farewell!"

"Well, then, au revoir!"

"Morgan! Morgan!" cried the voice of the man in the garden.

The young man pressed his lips once more to those of his love; then rushing to the window he sprang over the balcony at a bound and joined his friend.

Amélie gave a cry and went to the balustrade; but all she saw was two moving shadows entering the deeper shadows of the fine old trees that adorned the park.

XII.

THE GROTTO OF CEYZERIAT.

The two young men plunged into the shadow of the trees. Morgan guided his companion, less familiar than he with the windings of the park, until they reached the spot where he was in the habit of scaling the wall. It took but an instant for both of them to accomplish that feat. The next moment they were on the banks of the Reyssouse.

A boat was fastened to the root of a willow; they jumped into it and three strokes of the oar brought them to the opposite shore. There a path led along the bank to a little wood which extends from Ceyzeriat to Étres, a distance of about nine miles, and forms on the other side of the river a pendant to the forest of Seillon.

When they reached the edge of the woods they stopped. Until then they had walked as rapidly as it was possible to do without running, and neither of them had uttered a word. The whole way was deserted. It was probable, in fact certain that no one had seen them. They could breathe freely.

"Where are the Companions?" asked Morgan.

"In the grotto," replied Montbar.

"Why don't we go there at once?"

"Because we shall find one of them at the foot of that beech, who will tell us if we can go any farther without danger."

"Which one?"

"D'Assas."

A shadow was now seen moving from the tree.

"I am here," it said.

"Ah! there you are!" exclaimed the two young men.

"Anything new?" asked Montbar.

"Nothing; they are waiting for you two, to come to a decision."

"Let us hurry."

The three men continued their way. After going about three hundred yards Montbar again stopped and said in a low voice, cautiously:—

"Armand!"

At the call, a rustling among the fallen leaves was heard, and a fourth form issued from the underbrush and approached his companions.

"Anything new?" again asked Montbar.

"Yes, a messenger from Cadoudal."

"The one that came before?"

"Yes."

"Where is he?"

"With the brothers, in the grotto."

"Come."

Montbar sprang forward; the path was so narrow that the four men could only walk one after another; it rose for about five hundred paces along a rather easy but winding way. Presently they came to the opening of a glade. Montbar stopped and gave the same owl's-cry with which he had called Morgan. A single hoot answered him. Then from the middle branches of a bushy oak a man slid to the ground; he was the sentinel on watch at the entrance to the grotto. This entrance was not more than thirty feet from the oak. The position of the trees made it almost impossible to discover it.

The sentry exchanged a few words with Montbar, who seemed, by fulfilling the duties of the commander, to wish to leave Morgan entirely to his thoughts. Then, as his watch was probably not over, the sentinel again climbed the oak and was soon so completely blended with the body of the tree that those he had just left might have looked for him in vain in that aërial bastion.

The glade became narrower, the undergrowth more dense, as they neared the entrance to the grotto. Montbar reached it first and from a hiding-place known to him he pulled out a flint, a steel, some tinder, matches, and a torch. The sparks fell, the tinder burned, the match cast a quivering blue flame, to which succeeded the crackling resinous flames of the torch. Three or four paths were then visible. Montbar took one without hesitation. This path seemed to sink into the earth and turn back upon itself, as though the young men were returning underground upon their steps. It was evident that they were following the windings of an ancient quarry, probably the one from which were built, nineteen hundred years earlier, the three Roman towns, which are now mere villages, and Cæsar's camp which overlooked them.

At stated intervals this subterraneous path was cut entirely across by a deep ditch, which could only be crossed by a plank and was made impassable by merely kicking the plank into the hollow beneath. Also, at regular intervals, breast-works could still be seen, behind which men might intrench themselves and fire without exposing their persons to the sight or fire of the enemy. At five hundred yards, or thereabouts, from the entrance, a barricade of the height of a man presented a final obstacle to whoever tried to enter a circular space in which were now seated or lying ten or a dozen men, some reading, others playing cards.

Neither the readers nor the players moved at the noise made by the new-comers, or at the gleam of their light playing upon the walls of the dark approach, so certain were they that none but friends could reach that spot, guarded as it was.

In other respects the scene of this encampment was extremely picturesque; wax candles were burning in profusion (The Company of Jehu were too aristocratic to make use of any other sort of light), and these cast their gleams upon stands of arms of all kinds, among which double-barrelled guns and pistols held the chief place. Foils and

masks were hanging here and there upon the walls; several musical instruments were lying about; and a few mirrors in gilt frames proclaimed the fact that dress was a pastime not unappreciated by the strange inhabitants of this subterraneous dwelling.

At present they all seemed as tranquil in mind as though the news which had drawn Morgan from the arms of his wife was unknown to them or considered of no importance. Nevertheless, when the little group from without approached and the words "The captain! the captain!" were heard, they rose, not with the servility of soldiers to salute their commander, but with the loving deference shown by vigorous and intelligent men for one who is stronger and more intelligent than they.

Morgan then, for the first time, shook off his thoughts, raised his head, and passing before Montbar, advanced to the centre of the circle which had formed on catching sight of him.

"Well, friends," he said, "it seems you have had some news."

"Yes, captain," replied a voice, "the police of the First Consul does us the honor to be particularly interested in us."

"Where is the messenger?"

"Here I am," said a young man in the dress of a cabinet courier, who was still all covered with mud and dust.

"Have you despatches?"

"Written, no; verbal, yes."

"Where do they come from?"

"The private office of the minister of police."

"Can they be trusted?"

"I 'll answer for them; they are positively official."

"It is a good thing to have friends everywhere," said Montbar, in a sort of parenthesis.

"Above all, near Monsieur Fouché," said Morgan; "let us hear the news."

"Am I to tell it aloud, or to you privately?"

"I presume we are all equally interested; tell it aloud."

"Well, the First Consul sent for citizen Fouché at the Luxembourg, and blew him up on our account."

"Ha! ha! what next?"

"The citizen Fouché replied that we were clever scamps, very difficult to find, and still more difficult to capture when we had been found. In short, he praised us highly."

"Very amiable of him. What next?"

"Next, the First Consul answered that all that was nothing to him; we were brigands, and it was our brigandage which maintained the war in La Vendée; and whenever we could be prevented from sending money to Brittany there would be no more Chouannerie."

"Excellent reasoning."

"He said the West must be fought in the East and South."

"Like England in India."

"Consequently, he gave citizen Fouché *carte blanche*, and told him that even if it cost a million to kill five hundred men, he must have our heads."

"Well, he knows his man when he makes that demand; it remains to be seen whether we will let him have them."

"So citizen Fouché went home furious; and he vowed that before eight days had passed there should not be a single member of The Company of Jehu left in the land."

"The time is short."

"The same day couriers started for Lyon, Mâcon, Lons-le-Saulnier, Besançon, and Geneva, with orders to the garrison commanders to do personally all they could for our destruction, and also to obey without discussion M. Roland de Montrevel, aide-de-camp to the First Consul, and to put themselves at his disposal to employ as he thought best all the troops he needed."

"And I can add," said Morgan, "that M. Roland de Montrevel is already in the field. He had a conference yesterday with the captain of the gendarmerie, in the prison at Bourg."

"Does any one know why?" asked a voice.

"Confound him!" said another, "to engage our cells, I suppose."

"Morgan, do you still mean to safeguard that young man?"

"More than ever."

"Ah, that's too much!" muttered a voice.

"Why so?" retorted Morgan, imperiously. "Is n't it my right as a Companion of the Order?"

"Yes, certainly," said two other voices.

"Then I use it; both as a Companion and as your captain."

"But suppose that in the middle of a fray a ball takes him?" asked a voice.

"Then it is not a right I claim, nor an order I give, but an entreaty I make. Friends, promise me on your honor that the life of Roland de Montrevel shall be sacred?"

With unanimous voice, all present stretching out their hands, cried, —

"On our honor, we swear it!"

"Now," said Morgan, "let us look at our position under its true aspect, and not delude ourselves in any way. It is quite certain that the moment an intelligent police force sets out to pursue us and makes actual war, it is impossible for us to resist. We may trick them like a fox or double like a boar, but the question of our defeat is only a matter of time. That is my opinion at any rate."

Morgan questioned his companions with his eyes, and the answer was unanimous, though a smile was on their lips as they recognized their doom. But that was the way in those strange days. Men went to their death without fear, and they dealt it to others without emotion.

"And now," said Montbar, "have you anything further to say?"

"Yes," said Morgan; "I have to add that nothing is easier than to get horses, or even to escape on foot; we are all huntsmen, and more or less, mountain men. It will take us six hours on horseback to get out of France; on foot, twelve. Once in Switzerland, we can snap our fingers at citizen Fouché and his police. That's all I have to say."

"It would be very amusing to laugh at citizen Fouché," remarked Adler, "but very dull work leaving France."

"For that reason I shall not put it to vote until after we have talked with the messenger from Cadoudal."

"Ah, true!" exclaimed several voices; "the Breton! where is the Breton?"

"He was asleep when I left," said Montbar.

"He is still sleeping," said Adler, pointing to a man lying on a heap of straw in a recess of the grotto.

The Breton was awakened; he rose to his knees, rubbing his eyes with one hand and feeling for his carbine with the other.

"You are with friends," said a voice; "don't be afraid."

"Afraid!" said the Breton; "who are you, over there, who thinks I can be afraid?"

"Some one who probably does n't know what fear is, my dear Branche-d'Or," said Morgan (who recognized Cadoudal's messenger as the same who had come to the Chartreuse on the night when he himself had arrived from Avignon). "I ask your pardon on his behalf."

Branche-d'Or looked at the group of young men with an air which left no doubt of his displeasure at a certain sort of pleasantry; but as the group had evidently no intention to offend, their gayety having no insolence about it, he asked, with a tolerably gracious air: —

"Which of you gentlemen is captain? I have a letter to give him from my general."

Morgan advanced a step and said: —

"I am."

"Your name?"

"I have two."

"Your fighting name?"

"Morgan."

"Yes, that 's the one the general told me; besides, I recognize you. It was you who gave me a bag containing sixty thousand francs the night I was at the Chartreuse of Seillon. The letter is for you."

"Give it to me."

The peasant took off his hat, pulled out the lining, and took from between the lining and the felt a piece of paper which was blank and seemed at first sight like a second lining. Then, with a military salute, he offered the paper to Morgan, who turned it over and over and could see no writing; at any rate, none was apparent."

"A light," he said.

They brought a wax-candle; he held the paper to the flame. Little by little as it warmed the writing appeared. This experience seemed a familiar one to all the young men; the Breton alone was surprised. To his naïve nature the operation probably seemed witchcraft; but as long as the devil was aiding the royalist cause, the Chouan was perfectly willing to have dealings with him.

"Gentlemen," said Morgan, "do you wish to know what the Master says?"

They all bowed and listened while the captain read: —

My dear Morgan. — If you hear that I have abandoned the Cause, and am in treaty with the First Consul and the Vendéan leaders, disbelieve it. I am a Breton of Brittany, and therefore as obstinate as a true Breton. The First Consul sent one of his aides to offer me amnesty for my men, and the rank of colonel for myself. I have not even consulted my men; I refused for them and for myself.

Now, then, all depends on you; as we receive from the Bourbon princes neither money nor encouragement, you are our only treasurer; close your coffers, or rather cease to open those of the government for us, and the royalist opposition, the heart of which beats only in Brittany, will subside little by little, and before long come to an end. I need not tell you that my life will have ended first.

Our mission is dangerous; probably our heads will come off; but what can be more glorious than to have the future say above our graves: "All others despaired; but they, never!"

One of us two, my dear Morgan, will survive the other, but only to succumb later. Let that survivor say as he dies, *Etiamsi omnes, ego non.*

Count on me, as I on you.

Georges Cadoudal.

P. S. You know that you can safely give Branche-d'Or all the money you have in hand for the cause. He has promised me not to allow himself to be captured, and I trust his word.

A murmur of enthusiasm was heard as Morgan finished reading the letter.

"You have heard it, gentlemen?" he said.

"Yes, yes, yes!" repeated all voices.

"In the first place, how much money have we to send by Branche d'Or?"

"Thirteen thousand francs from the lake of Silans; twenty-two thousand from Les Carronnières, fourteen thousand from Meximieux; in all, forty-nine thousand," said Adler.

"You hear, Branche-d'Or?" said Morgan. "It is not much, — only half what it was the last time; but you know the proverb: 'The handsomest girl in the universe can only give what she has.'"

"The general knows what you risk to obtain the money, and he told me that however little you sent, he should receive it gratefully."

"The next shall be more," said the voice of a young man who had just joined the group, unperceived, so absorbed were all present in Cadoudal's letter; "more especially as we shall say two words to the mail-coach from Chambéry, next Saturday."

"Ah, there you are, Valensolle," said Morgan.

"No proper names, if you please, count; let us be shot or guillotined, drawn and quartered, but save our family honor. My name is Adler; I answer to no other."

"I beg your pardon, — you were saying?"

"That the mail-coach from Paris to Chambéry will pass on Saturday between the Chapelle-de-Guinchay and Belleville, carrying fifty thousand francs from the government to the monks of Saint-Bernard; to which I may add that there is between those two places a spot called the Maison-Blanche, which seems to me admirably adapted for an ambuscade."

"What do you say, gentlemen?" asked Morgan. "Shall we do citizen Fouché the honor to evade his police? Shall we leave France? Or shall we stay here and faithfully maintain The Company of Jehu?"

There was but one reply: —

"We will stay!"

"Right," said Morgan. "Brothers! I recognize you there. Cadoudal points out our duty in the admirable letter which we have just heard. Let us adopt his heroic motto: *Etiamsi omnes, ego non.*" Then, addressing the Breton peasant he added, "Branche-d'Or, the forty-nine thousand francs are ready, you can start when you like; promise the general in our name better things next time, and tell him from me that wherever he goes, even to the scaffold, I shall feel it an honor to follow or precede him. Au revoir, Branche-d'Or." Then turning to the young man who had seemed so anxious to preserve his incognito, "My dear Adler," he said, like a man who had recovered his natural gayety, lost for an instant: "I undertake to feed and lodge you this night if you will accept me as host."

"Gratefully, friend Morgan," replied the new-comer, "Only, let me tell you I can do without a bed, for I am dropping with fatigue, but not without a supper, for I am dying of hunger."

"You shall have a good supper, and a bed too."

"Where am I to go for them?"

"Follow me."

"I am ready."

"Come, then. Good-night, gentlemen! Is it your turn to watch, Montbar?"

"Yes."

"Then we can all sleep in peace."

So saying, Morgan passed his arm through that of his friend, took a torch in his other hand, and passed into the dark depths of the grotto, where we shall follow him if our readers are not too weary of this long session.

It was the first time that Valensolle, who came, as we have already said, from the neighborhood of Aix, had had occasion to visit the grotto of Ceyzeriat, recently adopted as the meeting-place of The Company of Jehu. He had often attended the meetings in the Chartreuse of Seillon; in fact, he knew the intricacies of that so well that when the farce was played with Roland the part of ghost was intrusted to him. Everything was therefore curious and interesting to him in the new retreat, where he now expected to take his first sleep, and which seemed likely to be, for some days at least, Morgan's headquarters.

It is always the case in abandoned quarries (which have something the character of subterranean cities) that the different streets excavated by the removal of the stone end in a cul de sac; that is to say a point in the mine where the work has stopped. In the present instance, one of these streets, seemed to prolong itself indefinitely. Still, there came a point where the mine would naturally have ended, but there, in the angle of the tunnelled way, was cut (for what purpose? the thing remains a mystery to this day among the people of the neighborhood) an opening two thirds the width of the gallery, wide enough, or nearly so, to give passage to two men abreast.

The two friends passed through this opening. The air at once became so rarified that their torch threatened to go out. Valensolle felt drops of ice-cold water falling on his hands and face.

"Bless me!" said he, "does it rain down here?"

"No," said Morgan, laughing; "we are only passing under the bed of the Reyssouse."

"Oh, then we are going to Bourg?"

"That 's about it."

"All right; you know you have promised me a bed and supper, and I don't trouble myself about anything else — unless that light goes out," added the young man, looking at the paling flame of the torch.

"That won't matter; we can always find each other."

"Always," said Valensolle. "But when one reflects that one is marching through a grotto, creeping under rivers, sleeping the Lord knows where, with a prospect of being taken, tried, and guillotined some fine morning, and all for princes who don't even know our names, and if they did know them would forget them, — I tell you, Morgan, it is stupid."

"My dear fellow," replied Morgan, "what we sometimes call stupid, what ordinary minds never do understand in such a case, has many a chance to become sublime."

"Well, well," said Valensolle, " I see that you will lose more than I in this business; I put devotion into it, but you put enthusiasm."

Morgan sighed.

"Here we are," he said, letting the conversation drop as though it were a burden he did not wish to carry. In fact, his foot had just struck against the first step of a stairway.

Preceding Valensolle, for whom he lighted the way, Morgan went up ten steps and reached a barred iron door. Taking a key from his pocket he opened it; and they found themselves in a burial vault. On each side of the vault coffins stood on iron tripods; ducal crowns and escutcheons, blazoned azure with the cross argent, indicated that these coffins were those of the family of Savoie before it came to bear the royal crown. A flight of steps at the farther end of the cavern seemed to lead to an upper floor.

Valensolle cast an inquisitive glance around him and recognized by the vacillating light of the torch the place he was in.

"The devil!" he exclaimed, "we are just the reverse of the Spartans."

"Inasmuch as they were republicans, and we are royalists?" inquired Morgan.

"No; because they had skeletons at the end of their suppers and we get them before we begin ours."

"Are you sure it was the Spartans who proved their philosophy in that way?" asked Morgan, closing the door.

"They or others, — what matter?" said Valensolle. "Faith! I have cited them; and like the Abbé Vertol who would n't rewrite his siege, I won't change my citation."

"Well, another time then you had better say Egyptians."

"Very good," said Valensolle, with an indifference that was not without a certain sadness. "I shall probably be a skeleton myself before I have occasion to air my erudition again. But what the devil are you doing? Why did you put that torch out? You are not going to make me sleep and sup here, I hope?"

In fact, Morgan had just extinguished the torch at the foot of the steps leading to an upper floor.

"Give me your hand," he said.

Valensolle seized the hand of his friend with an eagerness which showed how very slight a desire he had to make a longer stay in the gloomy vaults of the dukes of Savoie, no matter what honor there might be in such companionship. Morgan went up the steps. Then, by the tightening of his hand, Valensolle knew he was making an effort.

Presently a stone was raised, and through the opening a gleam of twilight trembled to the eyes of the young men, and a fragrant aromatic odor came to comfort their sense of smell after breathing the mephitic atmosphere of the vaults.

"Ah!" cried Valensolle, "we are in a barn; I prefer that to a tomb."

Morgan did not answer; he helped his companion to climb out of the vault, and then let the stone drop back into its place.

Valensolle looked about him. He was in the middle of a vast building entirely filled with hay, into which the daylight was penetrating through windows of such exquisite form that they certainly were not those of a barn.

"Why!" said Valensolle, astonished, "what place is this?"

"Climb up the hay, and go and sit down at that window," replied Morgan.

Valensolle obeyed, and scrambled up the hay like a schoolboy in his holidays; then he sat down, as Morgan told him, before the window. The next moment Morgan placed between his friend's legs a napkin and on it a pâté, bread, a bottle of wine, two glasses, and two knives and forks.

"Ha!" cried Valensolle, "Lucullus sups with Lucullus."

Then, gazing through the panes at a building with a great number of windows, which seemed to be a wing of the one they were in, and before which a sentry was pacing, he exclaimed: —

"Positively, I can't eat my supper till I know where I am. What is this building; and why does a republican sentry guard it?"

"Well," said Morgan, "as you absolutely must know, I will tell you. We are in the church of Brou, which a decree of the municipal council has converted into a barn for the storage of hay. That building which adjoins it is now the barracks of the gendarmerie, and the sentry is posted to prevent any one from disturbing us at supper, or surprising us while we sleep."

"Brave fellows!" said Valensolle, filling his glass; "their health, Morgan!"

"And ours!" returned the young man, laughing. "The devil take me if any one could dream of finding us here."

Morgan had hardly drained his glass when, as if the devil had accepted the challenge, the harsh and strident voice of the sentinel was heard, —

"Qui vive?"

"Hey!" said the young men to each other; "what 's all this?" as a body of some thirty men came from the direction of the Pont-d'Ain. They gave the countersign to the sentry and at once dispersed; the larger number, led by

two men who seemed to be officers, entered the barracks; the other and smaller body continued on its way.

"Attention!" said Morgan.

And both young men, on their knees, their ears alert, their eyes at the glass, watched and waited.

Let us now explain to the reader what caused this interruption to a repast which, though taken at three o'clock in the dead of night, was not, as we have seen, over tranquil.

XIII.

THEIR TROUBLE FOR THEIR PAINS.

Amélie's maid, the daughter of the jailer, was not mistaken; it was indeed Roland whom she had seen in the jail speaking to the captain of the gendarmerie. Neither was Amélie herself mistaken, she had just cause for fear; Roland was really in pursuit of Morgan. Although he avoided going to the château des Noires-Fontaines, it was not because he had the slightest suspicion of the interest his sister felt in the captain of The Company of Jehu; but he feared the indiscretion of the servants. He recognized Charlotte at the jail, but as the girl showed no astonishment he believed she had not recognized him, all the more because after exchanging a few words with the captain, he went out to wait for the latter on the place du Bastion, which was always deserted at that hour.

As soon as his duties in the jail were over the captain of the gendarmerie joined him. He found him walking up and down impatiently. Roland had merely made himself known at the jail; now he proceeded to explain himself and to initiate the captain into the object of his visit.

Roland had asked the First Consul, as a favor to himself, that the pursuit of The Company of Jehu might be confided to him personally, — a favor he obtained without difficulty. An order of the minister of war put at his disposal not only the garrison at Bourg, but also all the garrisons of the surrounding towns. An order from the minister of police enjoined all officers of the gendarmerie to render him every assistance.

He naturally applied in the first instance to the captain of the gendarmerie at Bourg, whom he had long known

personally as a man of courage and executive ability. He found him what he wanted. The captain was, moreover, furious against the Companions of Jehu, who had stopped diligences within a mile of his town, and on whom he was unable to put his hand. He knew of the reports relating to the last three stoppages which had been sent to the minister of police, and he was not surprised at the latter's anger. But Roland brought his amazement to a climax when he told him what had happened in the Chartreuse of Seillon, not only to himself, but more particularly to Sir John.

The captain had known by common rumor that Madame de Montrevel's guest had been stabbed; but as no one had lodged a complaint, he did not think he had the right to inquire into circumstances which it seemed to him that Roland wished to keep in the dark. In those days of danger and trouble more indulgence was shown to officers of the army than they might have had at other times. As for Roland, he had said nothing because he wished to reserve to himself the satisfaction of pursuing the assassins and sham ghosts of the Chartreuse when the time came.

He now arrived with every means in his power to put that design into execution, firmly resolved not to return to the First Consul until it was accomplished. Besides, it was one of those adventures he was always seeking, equally full of danger and picturesqueness; for Roland had no conception of Morgan's safeguard, which had twice protected him from danger, — once when he watched in the Chartreuse, and again when he tried to fight Cadoudal. How could he know that a cross had been marked above his name, and that the symbol of redemption guaranteed his safety from end to end of France?

The first thing to be done was, evidently, to surround the Chartreuse of Seillon and to search thoroughly into all its most secret places, — a thing that Roland now felt himself perfectly competent to do. The night was now too

far advanced to undertake it, and he postponed the expedition till the following evening. Meantime Roland remained quietly in the captain's room at the barracks so that no one in Bourg should suspect his presence or the object which brought him there. He was to guide the expedition on the following evening. In the course of the morrow a gendarme, who was a tailor, agreed to make him a sergeant's uniform. He was to pass as attached to the brigade at Lons-le-Saulnier and thanks to that uniform he could, without being recognized, direct the searching of the Chartreuse.

Everything happened as planned. Roland went to the barracks with the captain, arranged a bed on the floor of the latter's bedroom, and slept like a man who has just passed two days and two nights in a post-chaise. The next day he smothered his impatience by making, for the captain's instruction, a map of the Chartreuse of Seillon, with which, even without Roland's help, that worthy police officer could have directed the search and not gone an inch astray.

As the captain had but eighteen men under him, and it was not possible to surround the monastery completely with that number, or rather to guard the two exits and make a thorough internal search, and as it would have taken three or four days to bring in other men of the brigade stationed elsewhere, the captain, by Roland's order, went to the colonel of the dragoons in garrison at Bourg, told him of the matter in hand, and asked for twelve soldiers of the regular army, who, with his own men, made thirty in all. The colonel not only granted the twelve men, but hearing that the expedition was directed by Colonel Roland de Montrevel, aide-de-camp to the First Consul, he proposed that he himself should join the party at the head of his men.

Roland accepted his co-operation, and it was agreed that the colonel and his twelve dragoons should pick up Roland and the captain of gendarmerie with his eighteen men, the

barracks being directly on their road to the Chartreuse. The time fixed was eleven at night.

At eleven precisely, with military punctuality, the colonel of dragoons and his twelve men joined the gendarmes, and the two companies, now united into one, began their march. Roland, in the dress of a sergeant of gendarmerie, made himself known to his brother colonel, but to the troops and also to the gendarmes he remained, as agreed upon, a sergeant detached from the brigade at Lons-le-Saulnier. Only, as it might otherwise have struck them as strange that an officer of gendarmerie from another neighborhood, a stranger to these localities, was to be their guide, the men were told that Roland had been in his youth a novice at Seillon, and was therefore better acquainted than most persons with the mysterious ins and outs of the convent.

The first feeling of the men, it must be confessed, was a slight humiliation at being guided by an ex-monk; but on the other hand, as the ex-monk wore the three-cornered hat of a gendarme with a jaunty air, and as his whole manner and appearance was that of a man who had completely forgotten that he ever wore a cowl, they ended by accepting the humiliation, and reserved their opinion on the stranger until they could see how he handled the musket he carried on his arm, the pistols he wore in his belt, and the sabre that hung at his side.

The party was supplied with torches and started in deep silence, divided into three squads: one of eight men led by the captain of gendarmerie, another of ten men commanded by the colonel, the remaining twelve led by Roland. On leaving the town they separated. The captain of the gendarmes, who knew the localities better than the colonel of dragoons, took upon himself to guard with his eight men the window of the sacristy at La Correrie which looked toward the forest of Seillon. The colonel was commissioned by Roland to watch the main entrance of the monastery; with him were five dragoons and five gen-

darmes. Roland assumed the responsibility of searching the interior; he had with him five gendarmes and seven dragoons.

Half an hour was allowed to each squad to reach their posts; it was more than they needed. Roland and his men were to scale the orchard wall when half-past eleven was ringing from the belfry at Péronnaz. The captain of gendarmerie followed the main road from Pont-d'Ain to the edge of the woods, which he skirted till he reached his appointed station. The colonel took the cross-road which branches from the highway and leads to the great portal of the Chartreuse. Roland crossed the fields and soon reached the wall which, as the reader will remember, we have already seen him cross on two occasions.

Punctually, as half-past eleven was striking, he gave the order to scale the wall; by the time they reached the other side his men, if they did not yet know their leader was brave, at least knew he was active. He pointed in the dusk to a door, — the one that opened from the cloisters to the orchard. Then he sprang forward first among the rank grasses; first, he opened the door; first, he entered the cloister.

All was dark, silent, solitary. Roland, still guiding his men, reached the refectory. Absolute solitude, utter silence!

They crossed the hall obliquely and reached the garden without alarming a living creature except the owls and bats. The cistern was now to be searched; also the burial vaults, and La Correrie, that is to say, the chapel in the forest. Roland crossed the space between the convent and the cistern. After descending the steps he lighted three torches, kept one himself, and gave the other two, one to a dragoon the other to a gendarme; then he raised the stone and disclosed the stairway. The men who followed him now began to think him as brave as he was active.

They followed the subterranean passage and soon

reached the first iron gate. It was closed but not locked. They entered the vaults. Here was more than solitude, more than silence; here was death. The bravest felt a shiver in the roots of their hair.

Roland went from tomb to tomb, sounding each with the butt of the pistol which he held in his hand. Silence continued. They crossed the cavern, came to the second gateway, and passed into the chapel. Same silence; same solitude; all was deserted, as it seemed, for years.

Roland went straight to the choir; there lay the blood on the stones; no one had come to efface it. Roland could not bring himself to retreat. He fancied he was not attacked because of his numerous escort; he therefore left ten men and a torch in the chapel, told them to put themselves in communication, through the ruined window of the sacristy, with the captain of gendarmerie who was hidden in the adjacent forest, while he himself, with two men, retraced his steps.

This time the two men who followed Roland thought him more than brave, they thought him foolhardy. But little he cared whether they even followed him; he returned upon his own tracks in default of those of the bandits. The two men were ashamed, and after a moment's hesitation, they followed him.

Undoubtedly, the Chartreuse was deserted. When Roland reached the great portal he called to the colonel of dragoons; the colonel and his men were at their post. Roland opened the door and joined them. They had seen nothing and heard nothing. Then the whole party entered the convent, closed and barricaded the door behind them, so as to cut off the retreat of the bandits if they were fortunate enough to meet any. They went through the convent and the burial vaults to the chapel of La Correrie, where they rejoined the men left behind by Roland, who, on their side, had united with the captain and his eight men. The whole party were now assembled in the choir.

Two o'clock was striking. There was nothing to be done but to give up the search. Nearly three hours had been spent upon it without result. Roland, raised in the estimation of the gendarmes and the soldiers, who knew now that the ex-novice did not shirk danger, gave, to his deep regret, the signal for retreat by opening the chapel door which looked toward the forest. This they merely closed behind them without fastening, there being no longer any hope of encountering the brigands. Then the little troop at a quick step returned to Bourg. The captain of gendarmerie, with his eighteen men and Roland re-entered the barracks, while the colonel and his twelve dragoons continued their way across the town.

It was the call of the sentinel, as he challenged the captain and his party, which attracted the attention of Morgan and Valensolle ensconced in the hay; and it was the noise of their return to barracks which interrupted the supper of the young men, and caused Morgan to cry out at the unforeseen circumstance: "Attention!"

In fact, in the present situation of these young men every circumstance merited attention. So the meal was interrupted. Their jaws ceased to work in order to let their eyes and their ears fulfil their functions without hindrance. It was presently evident that the services of their eyes were alone needed. Each gendarme regained his sleeping-place in silence and without light. Most of the barrack windows remained dark, so that the watchers were able to concentrate their eyes on a single point.

Among those dark windows two were illuminated. They stood relatively back from the rest of the building, and precisely opposite to the window of the church at which the young men were supping. These windows were on the first floor; but, in the position the watchers occupied at the top of the bales of hay, Morgan and Valensolle were not only on a level with them, but they could even look

down upon them slightly. These windows were those of the captain of the gendarmerie. Whether from indifference on the part of the brave captain, or by reason of State penury, the windows were bare of curtains, so that, thanks to the light of two candles lighted by the captain in honor of his guest, Morgan and Valensolle could see everything that took place within the room.

Suddenly Morgan grasped Valensolle's arm with all his might.

"Hey!" said Valensolle, "what now?"

Roland had thrown his three-cornered hat upon a chair, and Morgan had recognized him.

"Roland de Montrevel!" he exclaimed, "in the uniform of a sergeant of gendarmes. This time we hold his trail while he is still seeking ours. It behooves us not to lose it."

"What are you doing?" said Valensolle, observing that his friend was preparing to leave him.

"I am going to inform our companions. You stay here and don't lose him from sight. He has taken off his sabre and laid down his pistols. Therefore it is probable he means to spend the night in the captain's room. To-morrow I defy him to take any road, no matter which, without one of us at his heels."

And Morgan, sliding down the fragrant declivity, disappeared from sight, leaving his companion crouched like the Sphinx with his eyes fixed steadily on Roland de Montrevel.

Twenty minutes later Morgan returned. By this time the captain's windows were dark like all the other windows of the barrack.

"Well?" asked Morgan.

"Well," replied Valensolle, "things were most prosaic. They undressed themselves, put out the candles, and lay down, the captain in his own bed and Montrevel on a mattress. I 've no doubt they are snoring at this moment in concert."

"In that case," said Morgan, "good-night to them, and to us too."

Ten minutes later the wish was granted, and the two young men were fast asleep, as though danger were not their bedfellow.

XIV.

THE HÔTEL DE LA POSTE.

The following morning about six o'clock, at the cold gray breaking of a February day, a rider, spurring a post-horse and preceded by a postilion, whose business it was to lead back the horse, was leaving Bourg by the road to Mâcon or to Saint-Julien.

We say Mâcon *or* Saint-Julien, because about three miles from the capital of Bresse the road forks. That to the right keeps straight on to Saint-Julien; that which deviates to the left leads to Mâcon. When the rider reached the place where the roads branched he was about to take that which led to Mâcon, when a voice which seemed to issue from beneath an upset cart implored his pity. The rider called to the postilion to see what the matter was.

A poor market-man was pinned down under a load of vegetables. He had evidently attempted to hold up the cart as a wheel sinking in the mud overbalanced the vehicle. The cart and its load had fallen upon him, but he hoped, he said, that no limbs were broken, and all he wanted was to get the cart righted, and then he could recover his legs.

The rider was compassionate to his fellow-being, for he not only allowed the postilion to stop and help the market-man, but he dismounted himself, and with a vigor hardly to be expected of a man as slender as he, he helped the postilion not only to right the cart, but to replace it on the paved centre of the highway; after which, he offered to help the man to rise. But the latter had told the truth; he was really safe and sound, and if there was a slight shaking of his legs it only served to show the truth of the

proverb that God takes care of the drunkards. The man was profuse in his thanks, and he took his horse by the bridle, as much, it was evident, to hold himself steady as to lead the animal.

The riders remounted their horses, put them to a gallop, and presently disappeared round a curve which the high road to Mâcon makes a short distance before it reaches the woods of Monnet.

They had hardly disappeared before a notable change took place in the behavior of the market-man. He stopped his horse, straightened himself up, put the mouthpiece of a tiny trumpet to his lips, and blew three times. A species of groom issued immediately from the woods which line the road, leading a horse by the bridle. The market-man pulled off his blouse and his coarse linen trousers, and appeared in vest and breeches of buckskin and top-boots. Then he searched the cart, drew forth a package which he opened, shook out a green hunting-coat with gold braiding, put it on, and over it a dark-brown overcoat, took from the servant's hands a hat which the latter gave him, and which harmonized with the rest of his costume, made the man screw his spurs into the heels of his boots, and sprang upon his horse with the lightness and ease of a practised rider.

"To-night at seven o'clock," he said to the groom, "you must be on the road between Saint-Just and Ceyzeriat. You will meet Morgan. Tell him that he *whom he knows of* has gone to Mâcon, but that I shall be there before him."

Then, without troubling himself about the cart and vegetables, which he left to the care of the servant, the ex-marketman, who was no other than our old friend Montbar, turned his horse's head toward Mâcon, and put him at a gallop. His steed was not a miserable post-horse, like that on which Roland was mounted. On the contrary it was a blooded animal, so that Montbar easily overtook the two riders, and passed them between the woods of Monnet and Polliat. The horse, except for a short stop at Saint-

Cyr-sur-Menthon, did the twenty-eight to thirty miles from Bourg to Mâcon without resting, in three hours.

When he reached Mâcon he dismounted at the hôtel de la Poste the only inn which at that time was fitted to receive traveller of distinction. From the manner in which Montbar was welcomed it was evident he was an old customer of the house.

"Ah! is it you, Monsieur de Jayat?" said the host. "We were asking only yesterday what had become of you. It is more than a month since you have been in these parts."

"Is it so very long as that, friend," said the young man, affecting to drop his *r's* after the fashion of the day. "I 've been hunting with friends, the Trefforts and the Hautecourts. You know those gentlemen by name, of course?"

"By name and in person."

"We hunted to hounds. They are finely equipped, my word for it! Can I breakfast here this morning?"

"Why not?"

"Then serve me a chicken, a bottle of Bordeaux, two cutlets, fruit, — any trifle will do."

"At once. Shall it be served in your own chamber, or in the common room?"

"In the common room; it is more amusing. Only give me a table to myself. Don't neglect my horse. He 's a fine beast, and I love him better than I do certain Christians."

The landlord gave his orders. Montbar stood before the fire with his coat-tails drawn aside, warming his legs.

"So you still keep the posting business?" he said to the landlord, as if desirous to continue the conversation.

"I should think so!"

"Then do you relay the diligences?"

"No; not the diligences, only the mail-coaches."

"Ah, tell me! I want to go to Chambéry pretty soon. How many places are there in the mail-coach?"

"Three: two inside, and one out, with the courier."

"Have I any chance of finding an empty seat?"

"It might happen; but the safest way would be to hire your own conveyance."

"Can't I engage my seat beforehand?"

"No; for don't you see, Monsieur de Jayat, that if travellers take places from Paris to Lyon they have the first right."

"Ah, the aristocrats!" said Montbar, laughing. "Apropos of aristocrats there is one behind me on a post-horse. He 'll be here presently. I passed him about a mile the other side of Polliat. I thought his horse was rather broken-winded."

"Oh!" said the landlord, "that would n't surprise me. My brothers in the business have a poor lot of horses."

"Why, there he is!" exclaimed Montbar. "I thought I had more of a lead on him."

"Do you still want chamber No. 1, Monsieur de Jayat?" asked the landlord.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because it is the best, and if you don't take it I shall give it to that gentleman, provided he wants to make any stay."

"Oh, don't consider me. I sha'n't know till later in the day whether I stay or go. If the new arrival means to remain give him, as you say, No. 1. I will content myself with No. 2."

"The gentleman is served," said the waiter, looking in through the door which led from the kitchen to the common room. Montbar nodded. He entered the common room just as Roland was entering the kitchen. The dinner was on the table. Montbar changed the place which had been laid for him, so that when he sat down his back was toward the door. The precaution was useless. Roland did not enter the common room, and Montbar breakfasted without interruption. When dessert was over, however, the host himself brought in his coffee. Montbar

understood of course that the goodman wanted to talk, and there were several things which he himself was anxious to hear about.

"Well," he said, "how about that traveller? Did he only change horses?"

"No, no, no;" replied the landlord. "As you said, he 's an aristocrat. He ordered breakfast in his own room."

"His room or my room?" asked Montbar; "for I am certain you have put him in No. 1."

"Hang it! Monsieur de Jayat, it is your own fault. You told me I could do as I liked."

"And you took me at my word; that was right. I shall be satisfied with No. 2."

"No, you won't. It is separated from No. 1 by a very thin partition, and you can hear everything that goes on in the other room."

"Nonsense, my dear man, do you suppose I have come here to do improper things or sing seditious songs? Why are you so afraid that stranger should hear what I say and do?"

"Oh, that 's not it!"

"What is it, then?"

"I am not afraid of your disturbing others. I am afraid that others may disturb you."

"Oh! is your new guest a roisterer?"

"No; but he looks to me like an officer."

"What makes you think so?"

"His general manner, in the first place. Then he inquired what regiment was in garrison at Mâcon, and when I told him the 7th mounted Chasseurs, he said, 'Good! the colonel is a friend of mine. Can a waiter take him my card and ask him to breakfast with me?'"

"Ah, ha!"

"So you see how it is. When officers get together they make such a racket. Perhaps they 'll not only breakfast, but dine and sup together."

"I 've told you already that I am not sure of passing the

night here. I am expecting letters from Paris, *post restante*, which will decide what I do. Meantime have a fire lighted in No. 2, and tell them to make as little noise as possible, to avoid annoying my neighbor, and send me up at the same time pens, ink, and paper. I have letters to write."

Montbar's orders were promptly executed, and he himself followed the waiter to see that Roland was not disturbed by his neighborhood. The chamber was just what the landlord had said. Not a movement could be made, not a word uttered, that was not heard in the adjoining room. Consequently Montbar distinctly heard a waiter announce the name of Colonel Saint-Maurice, then the resounding steps of that personage in the corridor, and the exclamations of the two friends delighted to meet each other. On the other side, Roland, who had been for a moment disturbed by the noise in his neighbor's room, forgot the noise as soon as it ceased, and there was no probability of its renewal. Montbar, left alone, sat down at the table, on which were paper, pens, and ink, and remained perfectly motionless.

The two officers had known each other in Italy, where Roland was under the command of Saint-Maurice, the latter being then a captain, and Roland a lieutenant. At present their rank was equal, but Roland had a double commission from the First Consul, and also from the minister of police, which put all officers of his own grade under his orders, and even, within the lines of his mission, other officers of higher rank.

Morgan had not been mistaken in supposing that Amélie's brother was in pursuit of The Company of Jehu. If Roland's presence and search in Bourg were not convincing, the conversation now held between the two colonels was proof positive. Montbar soon heard enough to know that the First Consul was really sending fifty thousand francs to the monks of Saint-Bernard; but this money was in some sense a trap laid for The Company of Jehu, if all

means failed to find them in the Chartreuse at Seillon, or in some other refuge.

Now it remained to be seen how these bandits should be captured. The case was eagerly debated between the two officers while breakfast lasted. By the time the dessert was served they were both of one mind, and a plan was made.

The same evening Morgan received the following letter: —

Just as Adler said, next Wednesday at five o'clock, the mail-coach will leave Paris with fifty thousand francs for the fathers of Saint-Bernard. The three places, that is, the place in the coupé and the two in the interior, are engaged by three travellers, who will join the coach, one at Sens, the two others at Tonnerre.

These travellers are, in the coupé, one of Fouché's best men; in the interior, M. Roland de Montrevel and the colonel of the 7th Chasseurs, now in garrison at Mâcon. They will all be in citizens' clothes to excite no suspicions, but armed to the teeth.

Twelve mounted chasseurs, with muskets, pistols, and sabres, will escort the coach, but at some distance behind it, so as to reach the scene of our operations when we make them. The first pistol fired is to be the signal for putting their horses to a gallop and falling upon us.

Now my advice is that in spite of all these precautions, in fact, because of these precautions, the attack should be made at the place agreed upon, namely, the Maison-Blanche. If that is also the opinion of our comrades, let me know it. I shall myself take the coach, as postilion, from Mâcon to Belleville. I will undertake to settle the colonel, and one of you must be responsible for Fouché's agent.

As for M. Roland de Montrevel, nothing will happen to him, for I have a means, known to me alone and by me invented, by which he can be prevented from getting out of the mail-coach.

The precise day and hour at which the coach to Chambéry will pass the Maison-Blanche is Saturday next at six o'clock. Answer in these words, "Saturday, six P. M." and all shall go off on rollers.

MONTBAR.

At midnight Montbar, who had meantime complained of the noise made in the next room, and had moved to a cham-

ber at the other end of the hôtel, was roused to see a courier, who was no other than the groom who had brought his horse saddled and bridled to the roadside. He now brought a letter containing merely the words that Montbar had asked for, "Saturday, six P.M. Morgan." But the postscript was longer. It said: "Do not forget, even when fighting, above all when fighting, that Roland de Montrevel's life is sacred."

The young man read this answer with evident satisfaction. The matter was now not the mere stoppage of a diligence, but a species of affair of honor between men of differing opinions, the clash of wills and courage. It was no longer a matter of gold to be gathered on the high-road, but of blood to be shed, — not of pistols loaded with powder in the hands of a child, but of deadly weapons handled by soldiers accustomed to their use. However, as Montbar had all the present day and the next day before him in which to mature his plans, he contented himself with ordering his groom to inquire which postilion would take the five o'clock mail-coach at Mâcon for the two stages between Mâcon and Belleville. He also sent the groom to buy four screw-rings and two padlocks fastening with keys.

He knew that the mail-coach reached Mâcon at half-past four, waited for the passengers to dine, and started again precisely at five o'clock. No doubt all his plans were previously laid, for after giving these directions to his servant, he dismissed him and went to bed and to sleep, like a man who had a long arrearage of slumber to make up.

The next day he did not wake, or at any rate he did not come downstairs, till nine o'clock. He asked the landlord, in a casual way, what had become of his noisy neighbor, and was told that he had started in the Lyon mail at six in the morning with his friend the colonel; but the landlord thought they had only engaged their places as far as Tonnerre. He also said that the traveller had made several inquiries about Monsieur de Jayat, whether he came

habitually to the hôtel, and more particularly whether he would be willing to sell his horse. The landlord had replied that he knew Monsieur de Jayat well, for he was in the habit of coming to the hôtel whenever any business brought him to Mâcon; and that as for the horse, he did not believe, considering the affection the young gentleman always showed for the animal, that he would be willing to sell him for any price whatever. On which the traveller said no more, and presently departed.

After breakfast M. de Jayat, who seemed to feel that time hung heavily, ordered his horse, mounted, and rode out of Mâcon by the Lyon road. As long as he was in the town, he allowed his horse to take the pace the graceful creature fancied, but once beyond it he gathered up the reins and pressed down his knees. That was hint enough, and the animal broke into a gallop.

Montbar rode through the villages of Varennes and La Crêche and the Chapelle-de-Guinchay, and did not stop till he reached the Maison-Blanche. The spot was exactly what Valensolle had described, and was admirably adapted for an ambuscade. The Maison-Blanche stood in a tiny valley between a sharp declivity and a rise of the road. A little rivulet without a name flowed at the corner of the garden, and made its way to the Saône just above Challe. Tall and bushy trees followed the course of the little stream and described a half-circle, inclosing the house on three sides. The house itself was formerly an inn, which proved unproductive to its landlord. It had therefore been shut up for the last seven or eight years, and was now beginning to fall into decay. Before reaching it, the main road, coming from Mâcon, made a rather sharp turn.

Montbar examined the locality with the care of an engineer engaged in choosing the ground for a battle-field. He drew a pencil and a note-book from his pocket, and made an accurate plan of the position. That done, he returned to Mâcon.

Two hours later his groom departed, carrying with him the plan for Morgan, having informed his master of the name of the postilion who was to take the coach that evening from Mâcon to Belleville. The man's name was Antoine. The groom also delivered to his master the screw-rings and padlocks he had purchased.

Montbar ordered a bottle of old Burgundy, and requested that Antoine might be sent to him. Ten minutes later Antoine appeared. He was a fine, handsome fellow, twenty-five years of age, about the height of Montbar, a fact which the latter on looking him over from head to foot remarked with satisfaction. The postilion stopped on the sill of the door, and carrying his hand to his hat in military salute, he said: —

"Did the citizen send for me?"

"Are you the man they call Antoine?" asked Montbar.

"At your service and that of your company."

"Well, you can serve me, friend. Shut the door and come here."

Antoine shut the door, came within two steps of Montbar, saluted again, and said: —

"Ready, master."

"In the first place," said Montbar, "if you have no objection, we will drink a glass of wine to the health of your mistress."

"Oh! oh!" cried Antoine, — "my mistress! Can men like me afford mistresses? They are for gentlemen such as you."

"Pooh!" said Montbar; "do you think, with a face and figure like yours, you can make me believe that you have made a vow of continence?"

"Oh! I don't say I 'm a monk in that particular. I may have a bit of a love affair here and there along the high-road — "

"Yes, at every inn; and that 's why we stop so often with our return horses to drink a drop or fill a pipe."

"Damn it!" said Antoine, with an indescribable twist

of his shoulders, "a fellow must have his fun, you know."

"Well, taste that wine, my lad. I 'll warrant it won't make you weep."

And filling a glass, Montbar signed to the postilion to fill another.

"A fine honor for me. To your health and that of your company!"

This seemed an habitual phrase with the worthy postilion, a sort of extension of politeness to his entertainer's friends.

"Ha!" he cried, after drinking and smacking his lips, "there 's a vintage for you! — and I who gulped it down at a swallow as if it were heel-taps!"

"You did wrong, Antoine."

"Faith! I know I did!"

"Luckily," said Montbar, filling his glass, "you can repair it."

"No higher than my thumb, citizen," said the facetious postilion, taking care that his thumb touched the rim of the glass.

"One moment," said Montbar, as Antoine was putting the wine to his lips.

"Just in time," said the postilion; "it was going down the red lane. What is it?"

"You would n't drink to the health of your mistress, but I hope you won't refuse to drink to the health of mine."

"Oh! that 's never refused, especially with such wine. To the health of your mistress and her company!"

And thereupon the citizen Antoine swallowed the crimson liquor, tasting and relishing it as he did so.

"Hey!" said Montbar, "you are too much in a hurry, my friend."

"Pooh!" said the postilion.

"Yes; suppose I have several mistresses. If I don't name the one I mean what good will it do her to drink her health?"

"Why, that 's true!"

"Sad, but you 'll have to try again, my friend."

"Ha! try again, yes! Can't do things half way with a man like you. The sin 's committed, let us drink to it."

And he held out his glass. Montbar filled it to the brim.

"Now," said Antoine, eying the bottle, and making sure it was empty, "there must n't be any mistake this time. What 's her name?"

"To the handsome Josephine!" said Montbar.

"To the handsome Josephine!" repeated Antoine.

And he swallowed the Burgundy with increasing satisfaction. Then, after drinking and wiping his lips on his sleeve, he said, as he set the glass on the table, "Hey, citizen, one moment!"

"What now?" said Montbar, "anything else that does n't please you?"

"I should say so! We have made a great blunder; but it is too late now."

"Why so?"

"The bottle is empty."

"That one is, but this is n't."

So saying Montbar took from the chimney corner another bottle already uncorked.

"Ah! ha!" cried Antoine, a radiant smile illuminating his face.

"Is there any remedy for the blunder?" asked Montbar.

"There is," responded Antoine.

And he held out his glass. Montbar filled it as scrupulously full as the first three times.

"Well," said the postilion, holding the ruby liquid to his eye, and admiring the sparkle, "I drank to the health of the handsome Josephine."

"Yes," said Montbar.

"But," said Antoine, "there must be a devilish lot of Josephines in France."

"That 's true. How many do you suppose there are, Antoine?"

"Ho! perhaps a hundred thousand."

"Granted. What then?"

"Well, out of that hundred thousand a tenth of 'em must be handsome."

"That 's a large estimate."

"Well, say a twentieth."

"So be it."

"That 's five thousand."

"The devil! You are mighty strong in arithmetic."

"I'm the son of a school-master."

"Go on!"

"Well, to which of those five thousand handsome Josephines did we drink, hey?"

"Faith, you 're right, Antoine. The family name must follow, true enough. To the health of the handsome Josephine —"

"Stop, stop. This glass was begun; it won't answer. If the health is to do her good it must be emptied and filled again."

He carried the glass to his lips.

"There, it 's empty," he said.

"And full," said Montbar, putting the bottle to it.

"I 'm ready. To the handsome Josephine —"

"To the handsome Josephine — Lollier."

And Montbar emptied his glass.

"By the Lord!" exclaimed Antoine; "why, Josephine Lollier, — I know her!"

"I did n't say you did n't."

"Josephine Lollier, — the daughter of the man who keeps the post horses at Belleville."

"Exactly."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Antoine; "you are not to be pitied, citizen, — a pretty slip of a girl! To the health of the handsome Josephine Lollier!"

And he swallowed his fifth glass of Burgundy.

"Now," said Montbar, "do you know what I brought you up here for, my lad?"

"No; but I don't blame you for it all the same."

"That 's very kind of you."

"Oh! I 'm a pretty good devil."

"Well, I 'll tell you why I sent for you."

"I 'm all ears."

"Wait. You 'll hear better if your glass is full than if it 's empty."

"Are you a doctor for deaf folks?" asked the postilion, jocosely.

"No; but I 've lived among drunkards," replied Montbar, filling Antoine's glass.

"A man is not a drunkard because he likes wine," said Antoine.

"I agree with you, my lad," said Montbar. "No man is drunk when he can carry his liquor."

"Well said!" cried Antoine, who seemed to carry his pretty well. "I 'm listening."

"You said you did not understand why I sent for you?"

"I did say so."

"But you must have known I had an object?"

"Every man has an object, good or bad; our curé says so," replied Antoine, sententiously.

"Well, mine, my friend," continued Montbar, "mine is to make my way at night into the courtyard of Nicolas-Denis Lollier, postmaster at Belleville, without being recognized."

"Recognized!" repeated Antoine, who was following Montbar's words with all the attention of which he was capable. "I understand. You want to get into Nicolas-Denis Lollier's courtyard without being seen, in order to see the handsome Josephine? Ha! ha! the sly dog!"

"You have it, my dear Antoine, and I want to get in without being recognized, because old father Lollier has discovered everything, and he has forbidden his daughter to speak to me."

"You don't say so! Well, what can I do about it?"

"Your wits are still in a muddle, Antoine. Drink another glass of wine and brighten them up."

"Right you are," said Antoine.

And he swallowed his sixth glass of wine.

"You ask what you can do, Antoine?"

"Yes, what can I do? that 's what I did ask."

"Everything, my friend."

"I?"

"You."

"Ha! now I 'm curious about that. Clear it up, clear it up!"

He held out his glass.

"You drive the mail to Chambéry to-morrow, don't you?"

"Yes, at six o'clock."

"Well, suppose Antoine is a good fellow."

"No supposing about it, — he is."

"Well, this is what Antoine does — "

"Go on, what does he do?"

"In the first place he empties his glass."

"Done! that 's not difficult."

"Then he takes these ten louis."

Montbar spread ten louis on the table.

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Antoine, "yellow boys, real ones! I thought they had all emigrated, the dear devils."

"You see there are some left."

"And what is Antoine to do so as to put them in his pocket?"

"Antoine must lend me his best postilion suit — "

"To you?"

"And let me take his place to-morrow night."

"Hey! yes, yes; so that you can see the handsome Josephine without being recognized."

"Ha, ha! — I reach Belleville at eight and drive into the courtyard; I say the horses are tired and must rest till ten, and from eight to ten — "

"Yes, yes, you can fool père Lollier."

"Well, will you do it, Antoine?"

"I 'm in for it! When a fellow is young he goes with the

young ones; when he's a bachelor he is in with the bachelors; when he's old and a papa he can go with the papa's and the old men, and cry out, 'Long live the fogies!'"

"Well, then, my good Antoine, you'll lend me your jacket and your best pair of breeches?"

"I've just got a new jacket and breeches that I have never put on."

"And you will let me take your place?"

"With pleasure."

"Then I'll give you five of these louis for earnest money."

"And the rest?"

"To-morrow, when I put on your boots; but — there's one precaution you must take."

"What's that?"

"There's talk about brigands robbing diligences; you must be sure to put the holsters on the saddle."

"What for?"

"For pistols."

"No, no, don't you go and do any harm to those fine young men."

"Do you call robbers who pillage diligences fine young men?"

"A man's not a robber because he takes the government money."

"Is that your opinion?"

"Yes it is; and, moreover, it is the opinion of a great many others. I know, as for me, that if I was a judge I would n't condemn them."

"Perhaps you would drink their health?"

"Ha! if the wine be good."

"I challenge you to do it," said Montbar, emptying the last of the second bottle into Antoine's glass.

"You know the proverb?" said the postilion.

"Which one?"

"Never defy a fool to commit his folly. To the health of The Company of Jehu!"

"So be it!" responded Montbar.

"And about those five louis?" said Antoine, putting his glass on the table.

"There they are; take them."

"Thank you; you shall have the holsters; but you take my advice, and don't put pistols in them, or if you take pistols do as Jérôme, the conductor of the Geneva diligence, did, — put powder and no balls in them."

And with that philanthropic advice, Antoine took his leave and departed down the stairway singing a postilion's song in a vinous voice.

Montbar, with every thread of his plot well in hand, went quietly to bed.

XV.

THE MAIL-COACH FROM CHAMBÉRY.

The next day, at five in the afternoon, Antoine, anxious no doubt not to be late, was in the courtyard of the hôtel de la Poste, harnessing the three horses which were to relay the mail for the stage to Belleville.

Soon after, the coach itself came in at a gallop and was pulled up under the window of a room, close to the back door of the hotel which had seemed to occupy Antoine's attention. If any one had paid attention to so slight a detail it might have been observed that the curtain of that window was cautiously drawn aside to enable the occupant of the room to see the persons who got out of the coach. These were three men, who, with the haste of hungry travellers, made their way at once to the brilliantly lighted windows of the dining-room.

They had scarcely entered when a smart postilion issued from the kitchen entrance, not as yet wearing his heavy riding-boots, but thin shoes, over which he intended to pull the boots. These he received from Antoine, slipping five louis into his hand at the same moment, and turning for the man to throw his riding cape over his shoulders, — a protection rendered necessary by the coldness of the weather.

These matters completed, Antoine slipped into the stable and hid in its darkest corner. As for the man to whom he had just yielded his place, feeling disguised, no doubt, by the high collar of the cape which hid half his face, he went straight to the horses which stood ready harnessed, slipped a pair of double-barrelled pistols into the holster of the one he was to ride, and profiting by the moment when the other

horses were being led into the stable by their postilion, he took a gimlet out of his pocket and screwed the four rings into the wood-work of the coach, one into each door and the two others into the body of the vehicle. After which, he put to the horses with a rapidity and correctness which showed he was a man familiar from childhood with all the details of an art pushed to extremes in our day by that honorable class of society which we call "gentlemen riders."

That done, he waited, quieting his restless animals by voice and whip, judiciously combined or used in turn.

Every one knows the rapidity with which the meals of the unhappy beings condemned to travel in a mail-coach are hurried through. The half-hour was not up, when the voice of the conductor was heard, calling out: —

"Come, citizen travellers, take your places."

Montbar placed himself close to the carriage door and instantly recognized, in spite of their disguise, Roland and the colonel of the 7th chasseurs as they jumped into the coach, paying no attention whatever to the postilion. The latter closed the door upon them, slipped the padlock through the two rings and turned the key, which he took out and put into his pocket. Then, walking round the vehicle, he pretended to drop his whip, stooped to pick it up, and so doing slipped the second padlock through the other rings, locked it, and feeling very sure that the two officers were securely fastened in, he sprang upon his horse, grumbling at the conductor who had left him to do his work.

In fact the conductor was still squabbling with the landlord about the bill when the third traveller got into his place in the coupé.

"Are you coming to-night, or to-morrow morning, François?" cried the false postilion, imitating Antoine as best he could.

"All right, all right, I'm coming," replied the conductor; then, looking about him, "Why! where are the travellers?" he asked.

"Here," replied the two officers from the interior and Fouché's agent from the coupé.

"Is the door properly closed?"

"I 'll answer for that," said Montbar.

"Very good, then off you go!" said the conductor as he climbed into the coupé and pulled the door to after him.

The postilion did not require to be told twice; he started his horses with a dig of the spurs into the belly of the one he rode, and a tingling lash of the whip on the other two. The coach dashed forward at a gallop.

Montbar drove as though he had never done anything else in all his life; as he crossed the town the windows rattled and the houses shook; no regular postilion ever cracked his whip with greater science.

As he left Mâcon he saw a little troop of horsemen; they were the twelve chasseurs told off to follow the coach without seeming to escort it. The colonel passed his head through the window and made a sign to the sergeant who commanded them.

Montbar appeared not to notice them; but after he had gone some four or five hundred yards he turned his head while executing a symphony with his whip, and saw that the escort was beginning to follow.

"Ah, ha! my children!" he said, "I 'll make you see the country!"

And he dug in his spurs and brought down his whip. The horses flew, the heavy vehicle rumbled over the cobblestones as though the chariot of the thunder was passing. The conductor grew uneasy.

"Hey! Antoine," he cried, "are you drunk?"

"Drunk? fine drinking!" returned Montbar. "I dined on a beetroot salad."

"Damn him! if he goes at that rate," cried Roland, putting his head out of the window, "the escort can't keep up."

"Is there an escort?" asked Montbar.

"Of course; we are carrying government money."

"That's another thing, then; you ought to have said so at once."

But instead of altering his pace the coach was whirled along as before; if there was any change, it went with greater velocity than ever.

"Antoine, if there's an accident, I'll shoot you through the head," shouted the conductor.

"Shoot me, indeed!" called Montbar, "everybody knows your pistols have n't any balls in them."

"But mine have!" cried the police agent.

"That's to be seen," replied Montbar, as he kept on his way at the same pace without heeding these remonstrances.

On they went with the speed of lightning through the village of Varennes, then through that of La Crêche and the little town of Chapelle-de-Guinchay; only half a mile further and they would reach the Maison-Blanche. The horses were dripping and tossing the foam from their mouths as they neighed with excitement.

Montbar glanced behind him; more than a mile back the sparks were flying from the heels of the escort's horses. Before him was the sharp declivity. Down it he dashed, gathering up his reins to master his horses when the time came.

The conductor had stopped expostulating, for he saw that the hand which guided the horses was firm and capable. But the colonel put his head from the window from time to time to look for his men.

Half way down the slope Montbar had his horses in hand, without, however, seeming to check their course. Then he began to sing at the pitch of his voice, the "Reveil du peuple," the song of the royalists, just as the "Marseillaise" was the song of the Jacobins.

"What's that rascal about?" cried Roland, putting his head through the window. "Tell him to hold his tongue, conductor, or I'll put a ball through his loins."

Perhaps the conductor might have repeated Roland's threat to Montbar, but he suddenly saw a black line blocking the road: —

"Halt!" thundered a voice.

"Postilion, drive on over the bellies of those brigands!" shouted the police agent.

"Drive on, yourself!" said Montbar. "Do you suppose I'm going over the stomachs of friends? Who-o-ah! — "

The mail-coach stopped as if by magic.

"Go on! go on!" cried Roland and the colonel, aware that the escort was too far behind to help them.

"Ha, you villain of a postilion," cried the police agent, springing out of the coupé and pointing his pistol at Montbar, "you shall pay for this."

But the words were scarcely uttered when Montbar fired, and the man rolled, mortally wounded, under the wheels of the coach. His finger, convulsed by death, had touched the trigger and the pistol went off, but the ball touched no one.

"Conductor!" shouted the two officers, struggling with the door, "open, open, by the powers of heaven! open!"

"Gentlemen," said Morgan, advancing, "we are not attacking your persons, we merely want the money of the government. Conductor! that fifty thousand francs, and quickly, too."

A couple of shots made answer for the officers, who, after shaking the door violently, were vainly attempting to force themselves through the windows. No doubt one of their shots took effect, for a cry of rage was heard and a flash illuminated the road.

The colonel gave a sigh and fell back upon Roland. He was shot dead.

Roland fired again, but no one replied to him. His pistols were both discharged; locked in as he was, he could not use his sabre, and he howled with rage.

Meantime the conductor was forced, with a pistol at his throat, to give up the money. Two men took the sacks which contained the fifty thousand francs and fastened them on Montbar's horse, which his groom had brought, ready saddled and bridled, as if to a meet. Montbar now kicked off his heavy boots and sprang into the saddle.

"My compliments to the First Consul, Monsieur de Montrevel," cried Morgan. Then turning to his companions: "Scatter!" he cried, "which way you will. You know the rendezvous for to-morrow night."

"Yes, yes!" replied ten or a dozen voices.

And the band dispersed like a flock of birds, disappearing down the valley into the shadow of the trees that lined the banks of the little river and surrounded the Maison-Blanche.

At that moment the gallop of a troop of horses was heard, and the escort, alarmed by the pistol shots, appeared at the summit of the hill and came down the slope like an avalanche. But too late: it found only the conductor sitting dazed by the roadside, the bodies of the colonel and of Fouché's agent, one under the wheels the other in the coach, and Roland a prisoner, roaring like a lion which vents its rage by gnawing at the bars of its cage.

XVI.

LORD GRENVILLE'S ANSWER.

While the events we have just recorded were taking place and occupying the minds and newspapers of the province, other events, of very different import, were maturing in Paris and about to occupy the minds and newspapers of all Europe.

Sir John Tanlay had returned to Paris bringing the answer of his uncle Lord Grenville. This answer consisted of a letter addressed to M. de Talleyrand enclosing a memorandum for the First Consul. The letter was couched in the following terms: —

Downing Street, Feb. 14, 1800.

Monsieur, — I have received and placed before the king the letter which you transmitted to me by means of my nephew, Sir John Tanlay. His Majesty, seeing no reason to depart from the long established customs of Europe in treating with foreign States, directs me to forward to you in his name the official reply which is herewith inclosed. I have the honor to be, monsieur,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

Grenville.

The letter was dry; the memorandum curt. Moreover, the letter of the First Consul to King George was autographic; and King George, not "departing from the long established customs of Europe in treating with foreign States," replied by a simple memorandum written by a secretary. The memorandum, it is true, was signed "Grenville." It was a long recrimination against France; against the spirit of disorder which disturbed the nation; against the fears which that spirit of disorder inspired in

all Europe; and on the necessity imposed on the sovereigns of Europe, for the sake of their own safety, to repress it. In short, the memorandum was virtually a continuation of the war.

The reading of such a dictum made Bonaparte's eyes flash with the flame which preceded in him his great decisions, as the lightning precedes the thunder.

"So, sir," he said, turning to Sir John, "this is all that you have obtained?"

"Yes, citizen First Consul."

"Then you did not repeat verbally to your uncle all that I charged you to say to him?"

"I did not forget one syllable."

"Did you tell him that you had lived in France three years, that you had seen her and studied her, and knew she was strong, powerful, prosperous, and desirous of peace while prepared for war?"

"I told him all that."

"Did you add that the war which England is making against France is a senseless war; that the spirit of disorder of which he speaks is, take it at its worst, only the effervescence of a freedom too long restrained, which it were wiser to confine to France by means of a general peace; that peace is the only *cordon sanitaire* which can hinder it from crossing our frontiers; and that if he rouses in France the volcano of war, France will spread like a wave, a torrent, over foreign lands? Italy is delivered, says the king of England; but delivered from whom? From her liberators. Italy is delivered, and why? Because I conquered Egypt from the Delta to the third Cataract; Italy is delivered because I was no longer in Italy. But — I am here: in a month I can be there, in Italy. What need I to win her back, from the Alps to the Adriatic? A single victory. Do you know what Masséna is doing in defending Genoa? Waiting for me. Ha! the sovereigns of Europe need war, do they, to protect their crowns? Well, they shall have it; and I say to you, Sir John, that I

will shake Europe till all their crowns shall tremble on their heads. Want war, do they? Bourrienne! Bourrienne!"

The door between the First Consul's study and the secretary's office opened violently, and Bourrienne rushed in, his face terrified as though he thought that Bonaparte was calling for help. But when he saw him, strongly excited, crumpling the diplomatic note in one hand and striking with the other on his desk, and beheld Sir John standing calm and silent and motionless at some distance, he knew at once that England's answer had irritated the First Consul.

"You called me, general," he said.

"Yes," said the First Consul, "sit down and write."

Then in a harsh, jerking voice, without seeking his words, but, on the contrary, as if the words were crowding through the portals of his brain, he dictated the following proclamation: —

"Soldiers, in promising peace to the French people, I spoke for you; I know your power.

"You are the men who conquered the Rhine, Holland, Italy, and gave peace beneath the walls of astounded Vienna.

"Soldiers, it is no longer your own frontiers that you have to defend; it is the enemy's country you must now invade.

"Soldiers, when the time comes, I shall be with you; and Europe, amazed, shall see that you belong to the race of heroes!"

Bourrienne looked up, expectant, after writing the last words.

"Well, that's all," said Bonaparte.

"Am I to add the sacramental words: 'Vive la République!'?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Because we have not issued a proclamation for the last four months, and something may be changed in the ordinary formulas."

"The proclamation will do as it is," said Bonaparte; "add nothing."

Taking a pen, he dashed rather than wrote his signature at the bottom of it, then, giving the paper to Bourrienne, he said: —

"Let it appear to-morrow in the 'Moniteur.'"

Bourrienne left the room, carrying the proclamation with him.

Bonaparte, left alone with Sir John Tanlay, walked for a moment up and down the room as though he had forgotten the Englishman's presence; then he suddenly stopped directly in front of him.

"Sir John," he said, "do you think you obtained from your uncle all that another man in your place might have obtained?"

"More, citizen First Consul."

"More! more! — pray, what have you obtained?"

"I think that the citizen First Consul did not read the king's memorandum with all the attention it deserves."

"Nonsense!" said Bonaparte, "I know it by heart."

"Then the citizen First Consul cannot have weighed the meaning of a certain paragraph."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it; and if the citizen First Consul will permit me to read him the paragraph to which I allude — "

Bonaparte unclasped the hand which gripped the note, opened the paper and said, "Read it."

Sir John cast his eyes over the document, with which he seemed to be familiar, paused at the tenth paragraph, and read: —

"The best and surest means for peace, and for its continuance, would be the restoration of that line of princes who for so many centuries have preserved to the French nation its internal prosperity and the respect and consideration of foreign countries. Such an event would have removed, and at any time will remove, the obstacles which are now in the way of negotiations and peace; it would guarantee to France the tranquil possession of her former territory

and procure for all the other nations of Europe, through a like tranquillity and peace, that security which they are now obliged to seek by other means."

"Well," said Bonaparte, impatiently, "I have read all that and thoroughly understood it. Be Monk, labor for another man, and your victories, your fame, your genius shall be forgiven you; humble yourself, and you shall be allowed to be great!"

"Citizen First Consul," said Sir John, "no one knows better than I the difference between you and Monk, and how far you surpass him in genius and renown."

"Then why do you read me that?"

"I only read that paragraph," replied Sir John, "to lead you to give to the one that follows its due significance."

"Read on," said Bonaparte, with repressed impatience.

Sir John continued: —

"But, however desirable such an event may be for France and for the world, it is not to this means alone that his Majesty restricts the possibility of a safe and sure pacification."

Sir John laid an emphasis on the last words.

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed Bonaparte, walking rapidly to Sir John.

The Englishman continued: —

"His Majesty does not assume to prescribe to France her form of government, nor the hands into which she may place the necessary authority to conduct the affairs of a great and powerful nation."

"Read that again," said Bonaparte.

"Read it yourself," replied Sir John.

He handed him the note, and Bonaparte reread it.

"Was it you," he asked, "who added that paragraph?"

"I certainly insisted on it."

Bonaparte reflected.

"You are right," he said, "a great step has been taken; the return of the Bourbons is no longer a condition *sine*

quâ non; I am accepted not only as a military power, but also as a political power." Then, holding out his hand to Sir John, "Have you nothing to ask of me, Sir John?"

"The only thing I seek has already been asked of you by my friend Roland."

"I have answered, monsieur, that I shall be pleased to see you the husband of his sister. If I were rich, or if you were less so, I would offer to dower her—" Sir John made a motion, "but as I know your fortune will suffice for two, and even," he added with a smile, "for more, I leave you the joy of giving, not only happiness, but wealth to the woman you love. Bourrienne!"

Bourrienne appeared.

"I have sent it, general," he said.

"Very good; but that is not what I called you for. At whatever hour of the day or night Sir John Tanlay presents himself, I shall be happy to receive him without delay; you hear me, my dear Bourrienne? you hear me, Sir John?"

Sir John bowed his thanks.

"And now," said Bonaparte, "I presume that you are in a hurry to be off to the château des Noires-Fontaines. I won't detain you, but there is a condition I wish to impose."

"And that is, general?"

"If I need you for another mission—"

"That is not a condition, citizen First Consul, it is a favor."

Sir John Tanlay bowed and retired.

Bonaparte prepared to follow him.

"Is there a carriage below?" he said to his secretary.

Bourrienne looked into the courtyard.

"Yes, general."

"Then get ready and come with me."

"I am ready, general; I have only my hat and overcoat to get, and they are in the office."

"Then we'll go," said Bonaparte.

He himself took his hat and coat, went down the private

staircase, and signed to the carriage to come up. Notwithstanding Bourrienne's haste he got down after him. A footman opened the carriage door; Bonaparte jumped in.

"Where to, general?" asked Bourrienne.

"The Tuileries," replied Bonaparte.

Bourrienne, amazed, repeated the order, and turned to the First Consul as if to ask an explanation; but the latter was sunk in thought, and the secretary, who at this time was still a friend, thought it best not to disturb him. The carriage started at a gallop — Bonaparte's usual mode of progression — and took the way to the Tuileries.

The Tuileries, inhabited by Louis XVI. after the days of the 5th and 6th of October, and occupied successively by the Convention and the Council of the Five Hundred, was, after the 18th Brumaire, left empty and devastated. Since that day Bonaparte had more than once cast his eyes on that ancient home of royalty; but he knew the importance of not arousing any suspicion that a future king might dwell in the palace of the abolished monarchy.

Bonaparte had brought back from Italy a magnificent bust of Junius Brutus; there was no proper place for it in the Luxembourg, and toward the end of November the First Consul sent for the republican David and ordered him to place the bust in the gallery of the Tuileries. How could any one suppose that David, the friend of Marat, was preparing the dwelling of a future emperor by placing in the gallery of the Tuileries the bust of the murderer of Cæsar? No one did suppose it, nor even suspect it.

When Bonaparte went to see if the bust were properly placed, he took notice of the havoc committed in the palace of Catherine de Médicis. The Tuileries was no longer the abode of kings, but it was a national palace, and the nation ought not to allow one of its palaces to become dilapidated. Bonaparte accordingly sent for citizen Lecomte, architect in charge of the public buildings, and ordered him to *clean* the Tuileries. The word might be taken in both senses, — moral and material.

The architect was required to send in an estimate of the cost of the said cleaning. It amounted to five hundred thousand francs. Bonaparte asked if, for that sum, the Tuileries could be made into a suitable "palace for the government." The architect replied that that sum would suffice not only to replace the Tuileries in its former condition, but to make it perfectly habitable.

A perfectly habitable palace was all that Bonaparte wanted; how should he, a republican, need regal luxury? The "palace of the government" ought to be severely plain, decorated with marbles and statues only. But those statues, what ought they to be? It was the business of the First Consul to select them.

Accordingly Bonaparte chose them from the three great ages and the three great nations: from the Greeks, from the Romans, from France and her rivals. From the Greeks he chose Alexander and Demosthenes, — the genius of conquest and the genius of eloquence. From the Romans, he chose Scipio, Cicero, Cato, Brutus, and Cæsar, placing the great victim side by side with his murderer, as great almost as himself. From the modern world he chose Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, the great Condé, Duguay-Trouin, Prince Eugène, and the Maréchal de Saxe; and, finally, the great Frederick and George Washington, — false philosophy upon a throne, and true wisdom founding a Free State.

To these he added warlike heroes: Dampierre, Dugommier, Joubert, to prove that while he did not fear the memory of a Bourbon in the great Condé, neither was he jealous of the fame of his brothers-in-arms, the victims of a cause already no longer his.

Matters were in this state at the period of which we are now speaking; that is, the last of February, 1800. The Tuileries had been "cleaned," the busts were in their niches, the statues on their pedestals; a favorable occasion for the next step was awaited.

That occasion came when the news of the death of Washington was received. The founder of the liberty of the

United States had ceased to breathe on the 14th of December 1799.

It was that event of which Bonaparte was thinking when Bourrienne saw by the expression of his face that he must be left entirely to the reflections which absorbed him.

The carriage stopped before the Tuileries; Bonaparte got out of it with the same haste with which he entered it, went rapidly up the stairway and through the apartments, examining more particularly those inhabited by Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. In the private study of Louis XVI. he stopped short.

"Here is where we will live, Bourrienne," he said, as if the secretary had gone with him through the labyrinth in which he had wandered, following that thread of Ariadne which we call thought. "Yes, we will lodge here; the Third Consul can have the Pavillon de Flore, and Cambacérès may stay at the Chancellerie."

"In that way," said Bourrienne, "when the time comes, you will have only one to turn out."

"Ha! pretty good!" said Bonaparte, catching Bourrienne by the ear.

"When shall we move, general?" asked Bourrienne.

"Oh, not to-morrow; it will take at least a week to prepare the Parisians to see me leave the Luxembourg and enter the Tuileries."

"Eight days," said Bourrienne, — "that will be long enough."

"Especially if we set about it at once. Come, Bourrienne, to the Luxembourg."

With the rapidity which characterized all his movements when serious matters were on hand, he returned through the suites of apartments he had already visited, ran down the stairs and jumped into the carriage calling out: —

"To the Luxembourg!"

"Wait! wait!" cried Bourrienne, still in the vestibule. "General, wont you wait for me?"

"Laggard!" exclaimed Bonaparte.

And the carriage started as it came; that is, at a gallop.

When Bonaparte re-entered his study he found the minister of police awaiting him.

"Well, what now, citizen Fouché?" he said; "you look upset. Have I been assassinated?"

"Citizen First Consul," said the minister, "you seemed to attach the utmost importance to the destruction of those bands who call themselves The Company of Jehu."

"Yes; inasmuch as I sent Roland himself in their pursuit. Have you any news of them?"

"Yes."

"From whom?"

"Their leader himself."

"Their leader?"

"He has had the audacity to send me a report of their last exploit."

"Against whom?"

"Against that fifty thousand francs you sent to the Saint-Bernard fathers."

"What became of them?"

"The fifty thousand francs?"

"Yes."

"Those brigands captured them, and the leader tells me he shall send them immediately to Cadoudal."

"Then Roland is killed?"

"No."

"How do you mean, no?"

"My agent was killed, and Colonel Saint-Maurice was killed, but your aide-de-camp is safe and sound."

"Then he'll hang himself," said Bonaparte.

"What good would that do? The rope would break; you know his luck."

"Where's the report?"

"Do you mean the letter?"

"Report, letter, thing — whatever it is that told you the news you have just told me."

The minister handed to the First Consul a small paper inclosed in a perfumed envelope.

"What is this?"

"The thing you asked for."

Bonaparte read the address: "To the citizen Fouché, minister of police. Paris." Then he opened the letter which contained what follows: —

Citizen minister, I have the honor to announce to you that the fifty thousand francs intended for the monks of Saint-Bernard came into my hands on the night of February 25, 1800 (old style), and that they will reach those of the citizen Cadoudal in a week.

The affair was well-managed, except for the death of your agent and that of Colonel Saint-Maurice. As for M. Roland de Montrevel, I have the satisfaction of informing you that nothing distressing has happened to him. I did not forget that he was good enough to receive me at the Luxembourg.

I write to you myself, citizen minister, because I presume that M. Roland de Montrevel is just now too much occupied in pursuing us to write himself. But the moment he has leisure I am sure you will receive from him a report containing all the details, into which I cannot enter for want of time and facilities for writing.

In exchange for the service I do you, citizen minister, I will ask you to do one for me, namely: inform Madame de Montrevel at once that her son is in safety.

MORGAN.

MAISON-BLANCHE.
On the road from Mâcon to Lyon, Saturday, 9 p. m.

"Ha, the devil!" cried Bonaparte, "a brave scamp!" Then, with a sigh, he added, "What captains and colonels those men would make for me!"

"What shall be done, citizen First Consul?" asked Fouché.

"Nothing. The matter concerns Roland, — his honor is at stake; and as he is n't killed he will revenge himself."

"Then the First Consul will take no further notice of the affair?"

"None, — for the present at least." Turning to his secretary he added, "We have other fish to fry, have n't we, Bourrienne?"

Bourrienne nodded affirmatively.

"When does the First Consul wish to see me again?"

"To-night, here, at ten o'clock. I shall move out of the Luxembourg in a week."

"Where shall you go?"

"To the Tuileries."

Fouché gave a start of amazement.

"Against your opinion, — I know that," said the First Consul; "but I'll do the whole business; you have only to obey."

Fouché bowed and prepared to leave the room.

"One moment," said Bonaparte.

Fouché turned back.

"Don't forget to inform Madame de Montrevel that her son is safe and sound; that's the least you can do for citizen Morgan, after the service he has done you."

And he turned his back on the minister of police, who retired, biting his lips till the blood came.

XVII.

CHANGE OF RESIDENCE.

The First Consul, left alone with Bourrienne, dictated to his secretary the following order of the day, addressed to the Consulate guard and to the army at large : —

"Washington is dead ! That great man fought against tyranny. He consolidated the liberty of America. His memory will be ever dear to the French people, to all free men in both hemispheres, but specially to French soldiers, who, like Washington and his American soldiers, have fought for Liberty and Equality.

"Consequently, the First Consul orders that the flags and banners of the Republic shall be hung with crape for ten days."

But the First Consul did not intend to confine himself to this order of the day. Among the means which he took to mask his removal from the Luxembourg to the Tuileries was one of those fêtes by which he knew, none better, how to amuse the eyes and also direct the minds of the spectators. This fête was to take place at the Invalides, or, as they said in those days, the Temple of Mars. A bust of Washington was to be crowned, and the flags of Aboukir were to be received from the hands of General Lannes.

It was one of those combinations which Bonaparte thoroughly understood, — a flash of lightning drawn from the coming together of contrasting facts. He presented the great man of a new world, and a great victory of the old world; he coupled the young America with the palms of ancient Memphis.

On the day fixed for the ceremony six thousand cavalry were in line between the Luxembourg and the Invalides. At eight o'clock Bonaparte mounted his horse in the grand courtyard of the Consular palace; issuing by the Rue de Tournon he took the line of the quays, accompanied by a staff of generals none of whom were over twenty-five years of age.

Lannes marched first at the head of the procession; behind him were sixty Guides, bearing the sixty captured flags; then came Bonaparte, alone, two horse's-lengths before any of his staff.

The minister of war, Berthier, awaited the procession under the dome of the temple; he leaned against a statue of Mars at rest; the ministers and councillors of state were grouped around him. The flags of Denain and of Fontenoy and those of the first campaign of Italy were already suspended from the columns which supported the roof. Two centenarian "invalides" who had fought under Maréchal Saxe were standing, one to right the other to left of Berthier, — caryatides of an ancient world, gazing across the centuries. To right, on a raised platform, was the bust of Washington, which was now to be draped with the flags of Aboukir. On another platform, directly opposite to the former, was an armchair for Bonaparte.

On each side of the temple were tiers of seats in which was gathered all the elegant society of Paris, or rather that portion of it which gave its adhesion to the order of ideas which were then to be celebrated.

When the flags appeared the trumpets blared, their metallic sounds echoing through the arches of the roof. Lannes entered first. At a sign from him, the Guides, mounting two and two the steps of the platform, placed the staffs of the flags in the holders prepared for them.

During this time Bonaparte, amid loud applause, took his seat in the chair placed for him.

Then Lannes advanced to the minister of war, and in that powerful voice which rang so clearly crying, "Forward!" on the battle field, he said: —

"Citizen minister, these are the flags of the Ottoman army, destroyed before your eyes at Aboukir. The Army of Egypt, after crossing burning deserts, surviving thirst and hunger, found itself before an enemy proud of his numbers and his victories, and believing that he saw an easy prey in our wearied troops, exhausted by their march and by incessant combats. He had yet to learn that the French soldier is greater because he knows how to suffer than because he knows how to vanquish, and that his courage rises and augments in danger. Three thousand Frenchmen, as you know, fell upon eighteen thousand barbarians, broke their ranks, forced them back, pressed them between our lines and the sea; and the terror of French bayonets is such that the Mussulmans, driven to choose a death, rushed into the depths of the Mediterranean.

"On that memorable day hung the destinies of Egypt, of France, of Europe, and they were saved by your courage.

"Allied Powers! if you dare to violate French territory, and if the general who was given back to us by the victory of Aboukir makes an appeal to the nation, — Allied Powers, I say to you your successes shall be more fatal to you than disasters! What Frenchman is there who would not march to victory again under the banners of the First Consul, or serve his apprenticeship to fame with him?"

Then, addressing the "invalides" for whom the whole lower gallery was reserved, he continued in a still more powerful voice: —

"And you, brave veterans, honorable victims of the fate of battles, you will not be the last to flock under the orders of him who knows your misfortunes and your glory, and who now delivers to your keeping these trophies won by your valor! Ah, I know you, veterans; you burn to sacrifice the half of your remaining lives to your country and its freedom!"

This specimen of the military eloquence of the conqueror of Montebello was received with deafening applause. Three times the minister of war endeavored to make

reply; and three times the "bravos!" cut him short; at last, however, silence came, and Berthier expressed himself as follows: —

"To raise on the banks of the Seine these trophies won on the banks of the Nile; to hang beneath the domes of our temples, beside the flags of Vienna, of Petersburg and London, the banners blessed in the mosques of Byzantium and of Cairo; to see them here, presented to the Nation by the same warriors, young in years, old in glory, whom Victory hath so often crowned, — these things are granted only to republican France.

"Yet this is but a part of what he has done, that hero, in the flower of his age covered with the laurels of Europe, he, who stood a victor before the Pyramids, from the summits of which forty centuries looked down upon him while, surrounded by his warriors and his learned men, he emancipated the native soil of art and restored to it the lights of civilization.

"Soldiers, plant in this temple of the warrior virtues those ensigns of the Crescent, captured on the rocks of Canopus by three thousand Frenchmen from eighteen thousand Ottomans as brave as they were barbarous. Let them here preserve the memory of that celebrated expedition, the object and the success of which do verily absolve war from the evils it brings with it. Let them here bear witness, not to the valor of the French soldier, — the universe itself resounds with that, — but to his inalterable constancy, his sublime devotion. Let the sight of these banners console you, veteran warriors, you, whose bodies, gloriously mutilated on the field of honor, deprive your courage of other exercise than hope and prayer. Let them proclaim from that dome above us, to all the enemies of France, the influence of genius, the value of the heroes who captured them; forewarning of the horrors of war all those who are deaf to our offers of peace. Yes, if they will have war, they shall have it — and have it terrible, unrelenting!

"The Nation, satisfied, regards the Army of the East with pride.

"That invincible army will learn with joy that the First Consul is watchful for its glory. It is the object of the keenest solicitude on the part of the Republic. It will hear with pride that we have honored it in our temples while awaiting the moment when we shall imitate, if need be, on the fields of Europe, the warlike virtues it has displayed on the burning sands of Africa and of Asia.

"Come, in the name of that army, intrepid general, come, in the name of those heroes among whom you now appear, and receive an embrace in token of the national gratitude!

"And at the moment when we again take up our arms in defence of our independence (if the blind fury of kings refuses the peace we offer) let us cast a branch of laurel on the ashes of Washington, that hero who freed America from the yoke of our worst and most implacable enemy. Let his illustrious shade tell us of the glory which follows the memory of a nation's liberator beyond the grave!"

Bonaparte now came down from his platform, and was embraced in the name of France by Berthier.

Monsieur de Fontanes, who was appointed to pronounce the eulogy on Washington, waited courteously until the echoes of the torrent of applause, which seemed to fall in cascades through the vast amphitheatre, died away. In the midst of these glorious individualities M. de Fontanes was a curiosity, half political, half literary. After the 18th Fructidor he was proscribed with Suard and Laharpe; but, being carefully hidden in a friend's house and never going out except at night, he managed to avoid leaving Paris. Nevertheless an unavoidable accident betrayed him. He was knocked down one night on the place du Carrousel by a runaway horse and was recognized by a policeman who ran to his assistance. But Fouché, who was at once informed, not only of his presence in Paris, but of his actual hiding-place, pretended to know nothing of him.

Some days after the 18th Brumaire, Maret, afterward Duc de Bassano, Laplace, who continued to be simply a man of science, and Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, who died

mad, spoke to the First Consul of M. de Fontanes and of his presence in Paris.

"Present him to me," said the First Consul.

M. de Fontanes was presented to Bonaparte, who, recognizing his supple nature and the unctuous flattery of his eloquence, chose him to deliver the eulogy on Washington, expecting, no doubt, that a little of the praise would spill over upon himself.

The discourse of M. de Fontanes was much too long to be reported here; all we can say about it is that it was precisely what Bonaparte desired it should be.

That evening there was a grand reception at the Luxembourg. During the ceremony at the Invalides a rumor was spread that the First Consul was about to remove to the Tuileries. Persons who were equally bold and curious, ventured on a few words to Josephine. She, poor woman, who still saw before her the tumbril and the scaffold of Marie Antoinette, had an instinctive horror of all that might connect her with royalty; she therefore hesitated to answer, and referred all questions to her husband.

Then another rumor began to be bruited about, which served as a counterpoise to the former. Murat, it was said, had asked the hand in marriage of Mademoiselle Caroline Bonaparte. Now Bonaparte had had a quarrel, lasting over a year, with the man who aspired to be his brother-in-law. The cause of this quarrel will seem rather strange to our readers.

Murat, the lion of the army, Murat, whose courage has become proverbial, Murat, who might well be taken by a sculptor as a model for the god of war, Murat, on one occasion when he must have slept ill or breakfasted badly, had a moment of weakness. It happened before Mantua, in which city Wurmser, after the battle of Rivoli, was forced to shut himself up with twenty-eight thousand men. General Miollis, with four thousand only, was investing the place. During a sortie attempted by the Austrians, Murat at the head of five hundred men, received an order to

charge three thousand. Murat charged, but feebly. Bonaparte, whose aide-de-camp he then was, was so irritated that he would not suffer him to remain about him. This was a great blow to Murat, and all the more because he was, at that time, desirous of becoming his general's brother-in-law; he was deeply in love with Caroline Bonaparte.

How had that love come about? It can be told in two words. Perhaps those persons who read our books singly are surprised that we sometimes dwell upon certain details which seem a little spun out for the particular book in which they appear. The fact is, we are not writing isolated books, but, as we have already said, we are filling, or we are trying to fill, a vast frame. To us, the presence of our characters is not limited to the appearance they may make in one book; the person you meet as aide-de-camp in this volume may be king in a second, exiled or shot in a third. Balzac did a great and noble work with a hundred aspects, and he called it "The Comedy of Human Life." Our work, begun at the same time with his, although, be it understood, we do not praise it, may fitly be called "The Drama of France."

Let us return to Murat, and tell how this love, which had so glorious and possibly so fatal an influence on his destiny, came to him.

In 1796 Murat was sent to Paris, charged with the duty of presenting to the Directory the flags and banners taken by the French army at the battles of Dego and Mondovi. During this trip he made the acquaintance of Madame Bonaparte and Madame Tallien. At Madame Bonaparte's house he again met Mademoiselle Caroline Bonaparte. We say "again met" because it was not the first time he had seen the lady with whom he was destined to share the crown of Naples. They had met in Rome at the house of her brother Joseph Bonaparte, and there, in spite of the rivalry of a young and handsome Roman prince, she had shown him a marked preference.

The three women combined to obtain for Murat from the Directory the rank of general of brigade. Murat returned

to the Army of Italy more in love than ever, and in spite of his new rank he asked and obtained permission to continue aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief. Unhappily, the fatal sortie at Mantua took place soon after, in consequence of which he fell into disgrace with Bonaparte. This disgrace had, for a while, all the characteristics of actual enmity. Bonaparte thanked him for his services as aide-de-camp and transferred him first to Neille's division and then to that of Baraguay-d'Hilliers. The result was that when Bonaparte returned to Paris after the treaty of Tolentino, Murat did not accompany him.

This did not at all suit the female conclave who had taken the young general under their protection. The beautiful intriguers pulled the wires, and as the expedition to Egypt was then preparing, they induced the minister of war to appoint Murat to a command in it. He embarked in the same ship as Bonaparte, namely the "Orient," but the latter did not address a single word to him during the voyage. After they reached Alexandria Murat was still unable to break the icy barrier opposed to him by the general, who, more to put him at a distance from his own person than to give him an opportunity to distinguish himself, confronted him with Murad Bey. But during that campaign Murat did such prodigies of valor, he effaced by such bravery the memory of a moment's weakness, he charged so intrepidly, so madly at Aboukir, that Bonaparte had not the heart to bear him further malice.

Consequently, Murat had returned to France with Bonaparte; he had powerfully co-operated with him on the 18th and especially on the 19th Brumaire. He had now been restored to full favor, and as a proof of that favor, he had received the command of the Consular guard. He thought this the moment for making known his love for Mademoiselle Bonaparte, a love already well-known to Josephine, who favored it; for which she had two reasons. In the first place, Josephine was a woman in the most charming acceptation of the word; that is to say, all the gentler passions

of women were attractive to her; Joachim loved Caroline, Caroline loved Joachim; that was enough to make her anxious to protect their love. In the second place, Bonaparte's brothers detested Josephine; Joseph and Lucien were her bitter enemies; and she was not sorry to make herself two ardent friends in Caroline and Murat. She therefore encouraged the latter to express his wishes to Bonaparte.

Three days before the ceremony we have just described Murat had entered Bonaparte's study, and after much hesitation and endless circumlocution, he proffered his request.

It is probable that the love of the young pair was no news to the First Consul, who, however, received it with stern gravity, and contented himself with replying that he would think about it. The matter, in fact, required thinking about. Bonaparte came of a noble family, Murat was son of an innkeeper. The alliance, at such a moment, might have great significance. Was the First Consul, in spite of his family birth, in spite of the rank to which he had raised himself, not only sufficiently republican but sufficiently democratic to mingle his blood with that of the common people?

He did not long reflect; his strong good sense and his logical mind told him that it was in every way for his interest to allow the marriage, and he gave his consent to it the same day. The double news of this marriage and of the removal to the Tuileries were launched upon the public at the same time; the one was to counterpoise the other. The First Consul was about to occupy the palace of the former kings and sleep in the bed of the Bourbons, but he gave his sister to the son of an inn-keeper!

And now, it may be asked, what dowry did the future Queen of Naples bring to the hero of Aboukir? Thirty thousand francs and a diamond necklace which the First Consul took from his wife, being too poor to buy one. Josephine, who was fond of her necklace, pouted a little,

but her husband pointed out that the gift thus obtained was a victorious answer to those who asserted that he had made a fortune in Italy; besides, she had taken the interests of the young couple to heart, she had promoted the marriage in every way, and therefore she ought to contribute to the dowry.

The result of this clever combination was that on the day when the Consuls left the Luxembourg for the "palace of the government," escorted by the son of an innkeeper, soon to be Bonaparte's brother-in-law, it did not occur to the crowds in the streets, assembled to see the cortège, to do otherwise than applaud and admire. And in truth what could be more admirable or worthy of applause than these very processions which had at their head a man like Bonaparte, and in their ranks such heroes as Murat, Moreau, Brune, Lannes, Junot, Duroc, Augereau, Masséna?

A grand review was to take place that day in the great square of the Carrousel; Madame Bonaparte was to be present, — not, to be sure, in the balcony of the clock-tower, that being evidently too royal, but at the window of Lebrun's apartment in the Pavillon de Flore.

Bonaparte started at one o'clock precisely from the palace of the Luxembourg, escorted by three thousand picked men, among whom was the splendid regiment of the Guides, created three years earlier as a body-guard to Bonaparte in his Italian campaigns in consequence of a great danger he escaped on one occasion: he was resting, greatly fatigued after the passage of the Mincio, in a little château, and was preparing to take his bath, when a retreating Austrian detachment, losing its way, invaded the château, which had no other guard than the sentries; Bonaparte had barely time to escape in his shirt.

A curious difficulty, which deserves to be recorded, presented itself on the morning of this removal, which took place on the 30th Pluviôse, year VIII. The generals of course had their horses and the ministers their carriages, but the other functionaries had not as yet thought it expedi-

ent to go to such expense. Carriages were therefore lacking. They were supplied by hiring hackney-coaches and pasting bits of paper of the same color as the carriage over their numbers.

The carriage of the First Consul alone had six white horses; but as the three Consuls were in the same carriage, Bonaparte and Cambacérès on the front seat, Lebrun on the back, it was, after all, but a pair of horses to each Consul. Besides, these six white horses, given by the Emperor Francis to the commander-in-chief Bonaparte after the treaty of Campo-Formio, were themselves a trophy.

The carriage crossed a good part of Paris following the rue de Thionville, the quai Voltaire, and the Pont-Royal. From the archway of the Carrousel to the great door of the Tuileries the Consular guard lined the way. As Bonaparte approached the arch, he raised his eyes and read the inscription placed upon it. That inscription was as follows: —

AUGUST 10, 1792.

ROYALTY IS ABOLISHED IN FRANCE,

AND SHALL NEVER RISE AGAIN.

An almost imperceptible smile flickered on the lips of the First Consul.

At the door of the Tuileries, Bonaparte left the carriage and sprang into the saddle to review the troops. When he was seen on his well-known charger, the applause burst wildly forth on all sides.

After the review was over he placed himself in front of the clock-tower, with Murat on his right, Lannes on his left, and behind him all that glorious staff of the Army of Italy. Then began the march past.

And now it was that one of those inspirations came to him which impress themselves forever on the hearts of soldiers. As the flags of the 96th, 30th, and 33d demi-brigades were borne past him and he saw those banners with nothing left but a stick and a few rags riddled with balls and

blackened with powder, he took his hat from his head and bowed.

Then, when the march was over, he dismounted from his horse and walked with a firm step up the grand stairway of the Valois and the Bourbons.

That night, when he was alone with Bourrienne, the latter said to him: —

"Well, general, were you satisfied?"

"Yes," replied Bonaparte, dreamily, "everything went off well, did n't it?"

"Wonderfully well."

"I saw you with Madame Bonaparte at the ground-floor window of the Pavillon de Flore."

"And I saw you, general, when you were reading the inscription on the arch of the Carrousel."

"Yes," said Bonaparte, "'August 10, 1792. Royalty is abolished in France, and shall never rise again.'"

"Had it better be taken away, general?" inquired Bourrienne.

"Useless," replied the First Consul, "it will fall of itself." Then, with a sigh, he added, "Bourrienne, do you know whom I missed to-day?"

"No, general."

"Roland. What the devil is he about that he does n't give us any news of him?"

What Roland was about we are now to see.

XVIII.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL.

The reader will not have forgotten the condition in which the escort of chasseurs found the mail-coach at the Maison-Blanche.

The first thing they did was to look for the obstacle which prevented Roland from getting out of the coach. They found the padlock, and they wrenched off the door.

Roland bounded from the coach like a tiger from its cage. We have said that the ground was covered with snow. Roland, hunter and soldier, had but one idea, — to follow the trail of the Companions of Jehu. He had seen them disappear in the direction of Thoissey; but he thought they were not likely to have continued in that direction, because between them and the little town ran the Saône, and there were no bridges across the river between Belleville and Mâcon. He ordered the escort and the conductor to wait for him on the high-road, and then, on foot and alone, and not even waiting to load his pistols, he started upon the traces of Morgan and his companions.

He was not mistaken. A mile from the high-road, the party had come to the river; there they had halted, probably deliberating, for the trampling of their horses was visible; then they had evidently separated into two troops; one had gone up the river toward Mâcon, the other descended it toward Belleville. This separation was doubtless made for the purpose of puzzling those who pursued them, if they were pursued. Roland had heard the parting call of their leaders, "*To-morrow night, you know where!*" He had no doubt, therefore, that whichever trail he followed, either up or down, it would lead him (if the snow did not

melt too fast) to the rendezvous where, either together or singly, The Company of Jehu were certain to assemble.

He returned therefore on his own tracks, and ordered the conductor to put on the boots thrown off by the false postilion, mount the horse, and take the coach to the next relay, namely to Belleville; the sergeant of chasseurs and four of his men, being able to write, were to accompany the conductor, and sign his statement of what had occurred. Roland forbade all mention of himself, and of where he had gone, lest anything should warn the brigands of his future projects. The rest of the escort were to carry back the body of their officer to Mâcon and make a statement to the authorities on their own account, and equally without allusion to Roland.

These orders given, the young man dismounted a chasseur, and took his horse, selecting the one he thought most serviceable. Then he loaded his pistols and put them in the holsters of the saddle in place of the regulation horse-pistols of the dismounted chasseur. Having done all this, and promised the conductor and the soldiers a speedy vengeance, conditioned, however, on their keeping his present proceedings secret, he mounted the horse and rode off in the direction he had already taken.

When he reached the point where the two bands separated, he had to choose which he would follow. He chose that which descended the Saône toward Belleville. He had an excellent reason for making this choice, though it might possibly take him out of his way for several miles. In the first place he was nearer to Belleville than to Mâcon. Then he had lately stayed twenty-four hours in Mâcon and might be recognized, whereas he had been in Belleville only long enough to change horses when accident brought him there by post.

The events we have just recorded took scarcely more than an hour to happen. Eight o'clock was striking from the church clock at Thoissey when Roland started in pursuit of the fugitives. The way was plain; five or six horses

had left their imprints on the snow; one of these horses paced. Roland leaped the two or three brooks which water the rolling land he had to cross on his way to Belleville. A hundred yards from Belleville he paused; for again the trail separated: two of the six riders had turned to the right, that is to say, they had struck away from the river; the other four had continued on to Belleville. At the very outskirts of Belleville another secession had taken place; three riders had gone round the town, one had entered it.

Roland followed the latter, sure that he could recover the traces of the rest. The one who had entered the town and followed the main street, had stopped at a pretty house, between court and garden, numbered 67. He had rung and some one had opened the gate and let him in; for the footsteps of a person could be seen through the iron railing, and besides these footsteps was another track, that of a horse being led to the stables. It is quite evident that one member, at least, of The Company of Jehu had stopped at that house. By going to the mayor of the town, exhibiting his authority, and asking for gendarmes, Roland might have arrested him at once. But that was not his object; he was not desirous of arresting a solitary individual; he wanted to catch the whole troop in a trap.

He made a note in his memory of No. 67, and continued his way. He crossed the town, went a few rods beyond it on the open road, and finding no other traces was about to retrace his steps when it occurred to him that if the tracks of the three riders reappeared anywhere it would be at the opening of the bridge. And there, sure enough, he found the trail of three horses, which were undoubtedly those he sought, for one of the horses paced.

Roland galloped in pursuit. Reaching Monceaux, same precaution taken, the riders had skirted the village; but Roland was too good a scout to trouble himself about that. He kept on his way, and at the other end of Monceaux he recovered the tracks. Not far from Châtillon one of the three horses had left the road, turning to the right toward

a little château, standing on a hill a short distance from the road between Châtillon and Trévoux. This time the remaining riders, evidently thinking they had done enough to mislead any one who had tried to follow them, rode straight through Châtillon and took the road to Neuville.

The direction taken by the fugitives was eminently satisfactory to Roland; they were, undoubtedly, on their way to Bourg; if they did not intend to go there they would have taken the road to Marlieux. Now, Bourg was the headquarters Roland had chosen for the centre of his own operations; it was his own town, and he knew with the minuteness of boyish knowledge every bush, every ruin, every cavern in the neighborhood.

At Neuville the riders had skirted the village. Roland did not trouble himself about a manœuvre already known and thwarted; but on the other side of Neuville he found the trail of only one horse. He could not be mistaken in that horse, however; it was the pacer. Certain of recovering that trace again Roland went back upon his steps. The two riders had separated where a road led off to Vannes; one had taken that road, the other had skirted the village, which, as we have said, was the way to Bourg.

This was the one Roland followed; for one thing, the gait of the horse made it far easier to follow the trail, because it could not be confounded with other tracks; besides, he was evidently on his way to Bourg, and between Neuville and Bourg there was but one other village, that of Saint-Denis. In any case it was not likely that the solitary rider intended to go farther than Bourg.

Roland therefore continued his way with more eagerness than ever, convinced that he was nearing the attainment of his object. And, as it proved, the rider had not skirted Bourg, he had boldly entered the town. There Roland fancied the man must have hesitated which way to take, unless his hesitation was only one trick more to hide his traces. But after ten minutes spent in following the

devious tracks Roland was certain on this point; it was not trickery but hesitation.

The print of a man's foot came from a side street; the rider and the man had evidently conferred, and the former had employed the latter as a guide. From that point the footsteps of a man went side by side with those of the horse. Both came to an end at the hôtel de la Belle-Alliance. Roland remembered that it was to this hôtel that the horse wounded in the attack at Les Carronnières had been brought back. In all probability there was some connivance between the innkeeper and The Company of Jehu. At any rate, it was more than probable that the rider now at the Belle-Alliance would stay there until it was time for the rendezvous the next night. Roland felt by his own fatigue that the man he had been following must need rest.

Three o'clock was striking from the truncated bell-tower of Notre-Dame. Roland debated what to do. Should he stop at some inn in the town? Impossible; he was too well known in Bourg; besides, his horse with its cavalry saddle-cloth would excite suspicion. It was one of the conditions of success that his presence at Bourg should not be known.

He could hide at the château des Noires-Fontaines and keep on the watch; but could he trust the servants? Michel and Jacques would hold their tongues, Roland was sure of them; so he was of Amélie; but Charlotte the jailer's daughter, she might gossip. However, it was the dead of night, every one was asleep, and the safest plan was certainly to put himself in communication with Michel. Michel would find some way of concealing his presence.

To the deep regret of his horse, who had no doubt scented a stable, Roland wheeled about and rode off in the direction of the Pont-d'Ain. As he passed the church at Brou he glanced at the barrack of the gendarmes, where, in all probability, they and their captain were sleeping the sleep of the just.

Roland cut through the little strip of forest which jutted, as we have said, into the road. The snow deadened the sound of his horse's feet. As he issued on the other side he saw two men moving along the road beside the ditch, and carrying a deer slung by its forelegs to a sapling. He thought he knew the cut of the men, and he spurred his horse to overtake them. The men had their ears on the alert; they turned, saw the rider who was evidently making for them, flung the animal into the ditch, and began to run toward the shelter of the forest of Seillon.

"Hey, Michel!" called Roland, more and more convinced that he had to do with his own gardener.

Michel stopped short; the other man kept on across the fields.

"Hey, Jacques!" cried Roland.

The second man stopped. If they were recognized it was useless to fly; besides, there was nothing hostile in the call; the voice was friendly, rather than threatening.

"Bless me!" said Jacques, "it sounds like M. Roland."

"I do believe it is he," said Michel.

Both men returned toward the high road.

Roland had not overheard what the poachers said, but he guessed it.

"Hey! yes, it is I," he cried, "I."

A minute more and Michel and Jacques were beside him. The questions of father and son were a cross fire, and it must be owned they had good reason for amazement. Roland in citizen's dress, on a cavalry horse, at three in the morning, on the road from Bourg to the château! The young officer cut short all questions.

"Silence, poachers," he said; "put that deer behind me and let us go to the house. No one must know of my presence at the Noires-Fontaines, not even my sister."

Roland spoke with military decision, and both men knew that when he once gave an order, there was no replying. They picked up the deer, put it behind Roland's saddle,

and followed the gentle trot of the horse at a run. There was less than a mile to do. It took only ten minutes. At a short distance from the house Roland pulled up. The two men were sent forward as scouts to see if all was quiet. Satisfied on that point they made a sign to Roland to come on.

Roland came, dismounted, found the door of the lodge open, and went in. Michel took the horse to the stable and the deer to the kitchen; for Michel belonged to that honorable class of poachers who kill game for the pleasure of killing it, and not for the selfish interest of sale. There was no need for precaution either for horse or deer; Amélie took no more notice of what went on in the stable than of what they served her to eat.

During this time Jacques lit the fire. When Michel returned he brought the remains of a leg of mutton and half a dozen eggs for an omelet. Jacques made up a bed in the office.

Roland warmed himself and ate his supper without uttering a word. The two men looked at him with an amazement which was not devoid of anxiety. A rumor of the former expedition to Seillon had got abroad, and it was whispered that Roland had led it. No doubt he was here for another such adventure.

When Roland had finished his supper he looked up and saw Michel.

"Oh, are you there?" he said.

"I am waiting for monsieur's orders."

"Here they are, then; listen to them."

"I am listening."

"It is a matter of life and death, — more than that, it concerns my honor."

"Speak, Monsieur Roland."

Roland drew out his watch.

"It is five o'clock. When the inn of the Belle-Alliance opens, be there as if you were just sauntering by; then stop a minute and speak to whoever opens it."

"That will probably be Pierre."

"Pierre or another, no matter. Find out from him who the traveller was who arrived last night on a pacing horse; you know what I mean, don't you?"

"You mean a horse that goes like a bear, both feet forward on the same side."

"Bravo! Find out if you can whether the traveller is preparing to go away this morning, or whether he is likely to stay all day at the inn."

"I can find that out, sure."

"Well, when you have found it all out come and tell me; but, remember, not a word about my being here. If any one asks news of me say a letter was received from me yesterday, and I was in Paris with the First Consul."

"Rely upon it."

Michel departed. Roland went to bed and to sleep, leaving Jacques to guard the building.

When Roland woke Michel had returned. He had found out all his master wanted to know. The horseman who had arrived in the night was to leave the next evening, and on the travellers' register, which every innkeeper was bound by law to keep in those days, was entered: "Saturday, 30th Pluviôse, *ten at night:* the citizen Valensolle, from Lyon, going to Geneva." Thus the alibi was prepared; for the register would prove that the citizen Valensolle arrived at ten o'clock; and it was impossible that he could have assisted in robbing the mail near the Maison-Blanche at half-past eight, and yet have reached the hôtel de la Belle-Alliance at ten.

But what struck Roland's mind the most was that the man he had followed through the night, and whose retreat and name he had just discovered, was no other than the second of Alfred de Barjols, whom he himself had killed in a duel near the fountain of Vaucluse; and that M. de Valensolle was, in all probability, the man who had played the part of ghost in the Chartreuse of Seillon.

So, then, The Company of Jehu were not mere thieves, but on the contrary, as rumor said, gentlemen of good family, who, while the noble Bretons were laying down their lives in the West for the royalist cause, were here, in the East, exposing themselves to the scaffold to send to the combatants the money they took from the government.

XIX.

AN INSPIRATION.

We have shown that in the course of his pursuit during the preceding night Roland could easily have arrested one or two of the men he was pursuing. He could now do the same to M. de Valensolle, who was probably, like Roland himself, taking a day's rest after a night of great fatigue. To do it, he need only write a line to the captain of the gendarmerie, or to the colonel of dragoons, who had made with him the ineffectual search at Seillon. Their honor was concerned in the affair. They would instantly surround M. de Valensolle in his bed, and at the cost of two men, killed or wounded by his pistols, he would be taken.

But M. de Valensolle's arrest would give warning to the rest of the company, who would instantly put themselves in safety beyond the frontier. It was better, therefore, to keep to his first idea; that is, to go slowly, to follow the different trails which must converge to one centre, and, at the risk of a general engagement, throw a net over the whole company.

To do this, M. de Valensolle must not be arrested. It was better to follow him on his pretended journey to Geneva, which was evidently only planned to foil investigation. It was agreed, therefore, that Roland, whose disguise was likely to be penetrated, should stay at the lodge, and Michel and Jacques should be the ones to head off the game. In all probability M. de Valensolle would not start from the inn before nightfall.

In the course of the day Roland made inquiries of Michel about the life his sister was leading in her mother's absence. He learned that during that time she had never once left the grounds of the château. Her habits were still

the same, except for the walks and social visits she had made with Madame de Montrevel. She rose at seven or eight in the morning, sketched or practised her music till breakfast, read or employed herself in some kind of embroidery, or took advantage of the sunshine to go with Charlotte to the river. Sometimes she called Michel to unfasten the little boat, and then, well wrapped in furs, she would be rowed up the Reyssouse to Montagnac or down to Saint-Just. During these trips she spoke to no one. Then she dined. After dinner she retired to her bedroom with Charlotte, and did not appear again.

By half-past six Michel and Jacques could decamp without Amélie being aware of it; and accordingly at that hour they took their blouses, gamebags, and guns, and started. Roland had given them their instructions: they were to follow the pacing horse until they knew where he took his rider, or until they absolutely lost his traces. Michel was to lie in wait near the stables of the inn. Jacques was to station himself just outside the village of Bourg, where the main road divides into three roads, one going to Saint-Amour, another to Saint-Claude, the third to Nantua. This last was also the high-road to Geneva. It was evident that unless he returned upon his steps, which was not probable, M. de Valensolle would take one or another of these roads.

Father and son started. Michel went toward the town by the road to Pont-d'Ain, passing the church of Brou. Jacques crossed the Reyssouse, followed the right bank of the little river, and found himself, after walking a few hundred feet beyond the faubourg, at the sharp angle made by the parting of the three roads. Father and son reached their separate posts at about the same time.

At this particular moment, that is, about seven in the evening, the usual stillness and solitude surrounding the château des Noires-Fontaines was broken by the arrival of a carriage drawn by post-horses, which stopped before the iron gates. A servant in livery got off the box and pulled the chain of the bell.

It was Michel's business to open the gates, but Michel was away, as we know. Amélie and Charlotte probably counted upon him, for the bell was rung three times before any one answered it. At last the maid appeared at the top of the steps, calling Michel. Michel of course made no answer. Then, protected by the locked gates, Charlotte ventured to approach them. In spite of the darkness she recognized the servant.

"Ah! is it you, Monsieur James?" she cried, somewhat reassured.

James was Sir John Tanlay's confidential valet.

"Yes," said the man. "It is I, mademoiselle, or rather it is Sir John."

The carriage door opened, and his master's voice was heard saying: —

"Mademoiselle Charlotte, will you please tell your mistress that I have just arrived from Paris, and have called to leave my card, and to ask, not to be received to-night, but to be allowed to present myself to-morrow, if she will grant me that favor. Ask her at what hour I shall least inconvenience her."

Mademoiselle Charlotte had a great opinion of Sir John, consequently she did the commission with alacrity. Five minutes later she returned to say that her mistress would receive Sir John the next day between twelve and one o'clock.

Roland knew what the Englishman had come for. In his own mind the marriage was a settled thing, and Sir John already his brother-in-law. He therefore hesitated a moment whether he should or should not make himself known, and tell his friend about his projects. But he reflected that Sir John was not a man to let him work them out alone. He, too, had a revenge to take on The Company of Jehu. He would certainly insist on taking part in the expedition, whatever it was; and that expedition, no matter what it might be, was certain to be dangerous, and another disaster might befall him. Roland's

luck, as Roland well knew, did not extend to his friends. Sir John, grievously wounded, had only just recovered. The colonel of chasseurs had been killed on the spot. He therefore allowed Sir John to drive away without giving any sign of his own propinquity.

As for Charlotte, she seemed not at all surprised that Michel was not there to open the gates. They were evidently accustomed to his absence, and his doings did not occupy the minds of either mistress or maid. Besides, Roland knew his sister well enough to understand this indifference. Amélie, feeble under a moral suffering wholly unsuspected by Roland, who attributed to simple nervous crises the fluctuations of his sister's character, Amélie was strong and grand in presence of real danger. That was, no doubt, why she felt no fear in remaining alone with her maid in a lonely house, without other protection than that of two men, who spent their nights in poaching. As for ourselves, we know that Michel and his son did really serve his mistress's desire more by absenting himself from the château than in staying near it. Their absence left the coast clear for Morgan, and that was all Amélie cared for.

That evening and part of the night went by, and still Roland heard nothing. He tried to sleep, but he slept ill. He fancied every moment that he heard some one at the door.

Day was just beginning to glimmer through the shutters when the door did actually open. Michel and Jacques had returned, and this is what had happened to them: —

They had each gone to their post, Michel at the inn door, Jacques at the junction of the roads. Twenty steps from the door Michel had met Pierre, and three words were enough to show him that M. de Valensolle was still at the inn. The traveller had announced that as he had a long ride to take he should let his horse rest, and not leave till nightfall. Pierre did not doubt that he was going to Geneva, as he said he was. Michel proposed to Pierre a

glass of wine. Pierre accepted, and after that Michel was certain of being duly warned of any change. Pierre was the hostler, and nothing could be done in the stable without his knowledge. A gamin attached to the hotel promised to convey the news to Michel, in return for which the latter gave him three charges of powder to make fire-crackers.

At midnight the traveller was still there. Pierre and Michel had consumed four bottles of wine, but Michel drank guardedly himself. He had found means to pour three of the four bottles into Pierre's glass, where they did not long remain. At midnight the wine-shop closed, and Michel, having nowhere to go, Pierre offered him a bed of straw in the stable. It was warm, he said, and comfortable. Michel accepted. The two friends went in, one staggering, the other pretending to stagger.

At three in the morning the servant of the hotel woke up the hostler. The traveller wanted his horse. Michel pretended that he, too, must be off on his watch for game early. It did not take him long to make his toilet. He had only to shake the straw from his blouse and hair and game-bag, after which he took leave of his friend Pierre and concealed himself at the angle of the street.

Fifteen minutes later the gate of the courtyard opened, and a man rode out on a pacing horse. It was M. de Valensolle. He took the streets which led to the Geneva road. Michel followed without concealment, whistling a hunting-tune. He could not run, however, as the rider might have remarked it. There was a moment therefore when the watcher lost sight of his game. But Jacques was there, thought he, at the fork of the roads. Yes, Jacques was there, but he had been there for over six hours of a winter's night, at five degrees of cold. Had he the courage to stand six hours in the snow and kick his soles against a tree?

Thinking thus Michel took a short cut through the streets and lanes, running at full speed; but horse and

horseman, in spite of his haste, had gone faster than he. He reached the fork of the roads. All was still and solitary. The snow, trampled the day before, no longer preserved distinct tracks. The steps of the horse were lost in the muddy road. He wondered what had become of Jacques; but his poacher's eye soon told him.

Jacques had no doubt stood on the watch at the foot of a tree. For how long? Difficult to say, but long enough to become very cold. The snow was well beaten down by his heavy hunting-boots. He had evidently tried to keep warm by walking up and down. Then suddenly he must have remembered a little mud hut on the other side of the road, such as the road-menders build as a shelter from the rain. He had gone down into the ditch and crossed the road. His trail was on the snow at the sides of the road, though lost for a moment in the centre. This trail formed a diagonal line making straight for the hut. It was evidently in the hut that Jacques had passed the night; but where was he now? When did he leave the hut? Why he had left it was plain enough, — to follow M. de Valensolle. The same footsteps which approached the hut were visible as they left it in the direction of Ceyzeriat.

So the rider had really taken the Geneva road. Jacques' footsteps plainly proved it. They were long and striding, like those of a running man, and they followed the road beyond the ditch and behind the line of trees, evidently to conceal himself from the rider. At a wretched tavern, one of those which bear inscribed above the door the legend, "Here they give food and drink, on foot or on horseback," the trail stopped.

It was evident that the traveller had halted here, for Jacques' footsteps had also stopped, and trampled the snow behind a tree. Then, probably after the door had closed on the traveller and his horse, Jacques had left his tree and crossed the road, — this time with hesitation, and taking short steps which led not to the door but to the window.

Michel put his own feet into his son's footsteps, and reached the window. Through the chinks of the shutter the interior, when lighted, could be seen; but as Michel now looked, the interior was dark, and he could see nothing. But it was very evident that Jacques had gone to the window and looked in. No doubt the interior was then lighted, and he had seen something.

Where had he gone on leaving the window? Round the house, close to the wall. This excursion was easy to follow. The snow was virgin. As to his purpose in going round the house, that was not difficult to make out. Jacques, like a lad of sense, had doubtless reflected that a traveller would not leave a good hotel at three in the morning, saying he was going to Geneva, only to put up in a miserable wayside tavern a mile from the town. He must have ridden through the yard, and gone out by some other exit. That was no doubt the reason why Jacques had gone round the house, hoping to recover the trail, if not of the horse, at least of the rider, on the other side.

Sure enough, from a small gate in the yard opening toward the forest which extends from Cotrez to Ceyzeriat, footsteps could be seen advancing in a straight line to the edge of the woods. They were those of a man, elegantly shod, and with spurs on his heels, for the spurs had left marks on the snow. Jacques had clearly not hesitated. He had followed the footsteps. The track of his thick shoes could be seen near that of the delicate boot, — the large foot of the peasant beside the slender foot of a city man.

It was now five o'clock. Day was breaking, and Michel resolved to go no farther. Jacques was plainly on the trail, and if so, the young poacher was worth as much as the old one. Accordingly, Michel made a good sweep, and returned to the tavern as though he were coming from Ceyzeriat, resolving to enter and wait for Jacques, who, he was certain, would know his father had followed him, and had stopped short at the wayside tavern.

Michel knocked on the window shutter, and was soon admitted. He knew the landlord, who was well accustomed to his nocturnal habits, and he called for a bottle of wine, complaining bitterly of his poor luck with the game, and asking permission to wait for his son, who was in the woods on the other side, and might have had better luck than he. Permission was of course given. Michel opened the window shutters in order to look out upon the main road.

It was not long before some one knocked on the glass. It was Jacques. His father called him.

Jacques had been just as unlucky as his father. No game; but he was frozen. An armful of wood was thrown on the fire, and another bottle of wine was brought. Jacques warmed himself and drank.

Then, as it was necessary for the two poachers to get back to the château des Noires-Fontaines before their absence should be noticed, Michel paid for the wine and the wood, and the pair departed. Neither had said one word before the landlord of the subject that occupied their minds. He was not to suspect they were on other trail than that of game. But no sooner were they fairly away from the house than Michel drew close to his son. Jacques then recounted how he had followed the man's traces till he reached a cross-road. There another man armed with a gun suddenly rose before him, and asked him what he was doing in the woods at that hour. Jacques replied that he was watching for game. "Then go farther," said the man; "don't you see this place is taken?" Jacques admitted the justice of the claim, and went on about a hundred steps further. But as he was inclining to the left to return to the cross-road from which he had diverged, another man, armed like the first, had as suddenly risen before him, and asked him the same question. Jacques had answered in the same words, "Watching for game." The man had then pointed to the edge of the woods, saying, in a threatening manner:

"If I may give you a piece of advice, young man, it is to go over there. It will be safer for you than here." Jacques had taken the advice, or rather had pretended to take it, for as soon as he reached the edge of the woods he had crept along through the ditch, until, being convinced that he could not now recover M. de Valensolle's trail, he had struck out into the open country and returned by the fields and the high-road to the tavern, where he hoped to find his father, and in fact did find him.

They reached the château des Noires-Fontaines, as we have seen, just as daylight was penetrating Roland's blinds. All that we have just related was told to the young man, with a crowd of details we must omit, which only convinced him that the two men armed with guns, who warned off Jacques, were not poachers as they seemed to be, but members of The Company of Jehu, guarding the place of their rendezvous.

But what could that place be? There was no deserted convent in that neighborhood, no ruin.

Suddenly Roland struck his forehead.

"Idiot that I am!" he cried; "why did I never think of that?"

A smile of triumph crossed his lips, and addressing the two men, who were mortified to have brought him no more definite news, he cried out: —

"I know all I want to know. Go to bed and sleep sound, for you 've well deserved it."

He himself, setting them the example, now slept like a man whose brain has solved a problem of the utmost importance, which has long harassed it.

An idea had flashed into his mind that The Company of Jehu, having abandoned the Chartreuse of Seillon, must have taken the grottos of Ceyzeriat for their secret meetings; and at the same instant he suddenly remembered the subterranean passage which led from those grottos to the church at Brou.

XX.

A RECONNAISSANCE.

The same day Sir John Tanlay, making use of the permission granted to him the evening before, presented himself between twelve and one o'clock at the château des Noires-Fontaines.

The scene which took place between himself and Mademoiselle de Montrevel was exactly as Morgan had advised. Sir John was accepted as the friend of the family, and as a suitor whose attentions were most flattering. Amélie made no opposition to the wishes of her mother and brother, nor to the orders of the First Consul, further than to dwell on the state of her health, and to ask for delay on that account. Sir John bowed and yielded; for in truth he had already obtained more than he hoped, — he was accepted.

He felt, however, that his presence in Bourg, if prolonged, would seem an impropriety, Amélie being (still on the score of health) parted, for the present, from her mother and brother. He therefore announced that he would pay her a second visit on the succeeding day, and leave Bourg the same evening. He would wait, he said, till she could come to Paris, or until Madame de Montrevel returned home. The latter arrangement was the more probable of the two, for Amélie assured him that she needed country air and spring-like weather to assist her in recovering her health.

Thanks to Sir John's considerate delicacy, the plan arranged between Amélie and Morgan was thus carried out, and the two lovers had before them a period of solitude, and the freedom to form their plans.

Michel heard the circumstances of this interview from Charlotte, and Roland heard them from Michel. They determined him to await Sir John's departure before he took any steps against The Company of Jehu; but this did not prevent him from endeavoring to solve a last remaining doubt in his own mind. When night came he put on a hunting-suit, and over it Michel's blouse, hid his features by a slouched hat, put a pair of pistols into his knife-belt (hidden by the blouse), and boldly took the road from the Noires-Fontaines to Bourg. He stopped at the barracks of the gendarmerie, and asked to speak to the captain.

The captain was in his room. Roland went up and made himself known. Then, as it was only eight o'clock, and persons were passing in the street, he asked to extinguish the lamp, and they talked in darkness. The captain already knew what had happened three days earlier at the Maison-Blanche. Certain that Roland had not been killed, he was expecting him. To his great astonishment Roland asked him for only one thing, or rather for two things: the key of the church of Bourg, and a crowbar.

The captain gave him the articles, and asked if he should not accompany him, but Roland refused. It was evident to his mind that he had been betrayed by some one in connection with the affair of the Maison-Blanche, and he would not expose himself to another defeat. He therefore begged the captain not to speak of his presence in Bourg to any one, and to await his return, even if it were delayed for some hours. The captain agreed.

Roland, the key in his right hand, the crow-bar in his left, reached the side door of the church without making any noise. This he unlocked, entered, relocked behind him, and found himself facing a wall of hay. He listened. The deepest silence reigned in the solitary church. He remembered his boyish habits, took his bearings, put the key in his pocket, and scrambled up the hay, which was about fifteen feet high, and seemed a sort of platform. When he reached the top he slid down on the other side,

as though he were descending the scarp of a fortification, and reached the pavement of the church, which was wholly composed of monumental stones.

The choir was empty, thanks to a rood-screen which protected it on one side, and also to the walls which enclosed it to right and left. The door of the screen was open. Roland passed without difficulty into the choir. There he was face to face with the monument of Philibert le Beau. At the head of the tomb was a large square flag-stone. It covered the steps which led to the burial vaults.

Roland must have known the way, for as soon as he came to the stone he knelt down and felt with his hand for the edge of it. When he found the edge he stood up, inserted his lever, and raised the slab. With one hand he held it above his head, while he went down the steps. Then he slowly lowered it into place. It seemed as though this nocturnal visitor was voluntarily parting from the land of the living, and descending to the world of the dead. And strange indeed must have seemed to him who sees by night as by day, on the earth or beneath it, — the impassibility of this young man, who passed among the dead in search of the living, and who, in spite of the darkness, solitude, and silence, did not shudder even at the touch of the mortuary marbles.

He walked on feeling his way among the tombs, until he found the iron gate which led to the subterranean passage. He looked for the lock. It was only bolted. He put the end of his tool between the bolt and the staple, and pushed it gently. The gate opened. He closed it after him, but did not bolt it, so as to avoid delay on his return. He left the crowbar at the corner of the gate.

Then, with straining ears, dilated pupils, every sense excited by the effort to hear, the need to breathe, the impossibility of seeing, he advanced slowly, a pistol in one hand, and touching the wall with the other to guide himself along. He walked thus for fifteen minutes. A few

drops of ice-cold water filtering through the roof fell on his hands and shoulders, and told him he was passing beneath the river.

At the end of these fifteen minutes he found the door which opened from the passage into the quarry. There he halted a moment. He could breathe more freely. He now fancied that he heard distant sounds, and could see flickering lights, like will-o'-the-wisps, on the stone pillars which held up the roof. An observer might have thought, not distinguishing the face of the silent listener, that he showed hesitation; but the moment his countenance was fully seen no one could have mistaken its expression of hope.

He now went on in the direction of the lights he fancied he had seen, of the noises he felt sure that he had heard. As he approached, the noise became distinct, the lights more vivid. It was evident that the quarry was inhabited. By whom? He did not yet know, but he would know.

He was not more than ten steps from that open space within the granite walls which we have already described on our first visit to the grotto of Ceyzeriat. Roland clung closely to the wall, and moved forward almost imperceptibly. In the dim half-light he looked like a gliding bas-relief.

Presently his head passed beyond an angle of the wall, and his eyes were plunged into what we may call the camp of The Company of Jehu. A dozen or more of the members were there, supping. A mad desire took possession of Roland. For an instant he thought of precipitating himself into the midst of those men, attacking them singly, and fighting till he died. But he repressed the crazy thought, withdrew his head as slowly as he had advanced it, and, with his eyes beaming and his heart full of joy, he returned, unseen, unsuspected, along the way he had come.

This time he was sure of his vengeance, his deadly, terrible vengeance, — deadly, because, in like manner as

he himself had been spared (he suspected intentionally), he meant to spare others; with this difference, that whereas he was spared for life, he would order these men spared for death, death on the scaffold.

Half way back he thought he heard a noise behind him. He turned, and was certain he saw a gleam of light. He quickened his steps. The gate once passed there was no danger of losing the way. It was no longer a quarry with a hundred turnings. It was a straight and narrow vaulted passage leading to the tombs. At the end of ten minutes he again passed under the river, and two or three minutes later he touched the iron gate with his outstretched hand.

He took up the crowbar at the place where he left it, pulled the gate gently after him, bolted it as before, and then, without making any noise, and guiding himself by the tombs, he regained the staircase, pushed up the flagstone with his head, and stood once more in the land of the living. There it was comparatively daylight. He left the choir, closed the door of the screen as he had found it, scaled the hay, crossed its upper surface, and slid down on the other side. The key of the church was in his pocket. He unlocked the door, and was in the street.

The captain of gendarmerie was anxiously awaiting him. They conferred together a few moments, and then they returned to Bourg, by the outer road to avoid being seen, entered the town through the market-gate, and followed the rue de la Révolution, the rue de la Liberté, the rue d'Espagne, since called the rue Simonneau. Here Roland ensconced himself in a corner of the rue du Greffe and waited. The captain continued his way alone. He went by the rue des Ursules (called for the last seven years the rue des Casernes). This was where the colonel of dragoons lived, and that officer had just gone to bed when the captain of gendarmerie entered his room. In two words the latter told all, and the colonel got up at once and dressed in haste.

At the moment when the cavalry officer and the captain of gendarmes appeared on the street, a shadow detached itself from the opposite wall, and came up to them. That shadow was Roland. The three men stood talking together about ten minutes, Roland giving his orders, the other two listening and approving. Then they separated. The dragoon officer went home. Roland and the captain followed the rue de l'Étoile, the Steps of the Jacobins and the rue du Bourgneuf till they once more reached the outer road. Then they struck diagonally across to the high-road of the Pont-d'Ain. The captain stopped at the barracks, which were on the way, and Roland took his way alone to the château.

Twenty minutes later, in order not to wake Amélie, he rapped on Michel's shutter. Michel opened his window, and with one bound Roland, devoured by that fever which took possession of him whenever he incurred, or merely dreamed of some danger, sprang into the room.

He would certainly not have awakened Amélie had he rung at the gate, for Amélie was not asleep. Charlotte, who had been into the town ostensibly to see her father, but really to take a letter from her mistress to Morgan, had seen Morgan and brought back his answer. Amélie was reading that answer, which was as follows: —

DEAR LOVE OF MINE! — Yes, all goes well on your side, for you are the angel; but I greatly fear that all may go ill on mine, for I am the demon.

I must see you, I must hold you in my arms and press you to my heart. I know not what presentiment hangs over me; but I am sad — sad as death.

Send Charlotte to-morrow to make sure that Sir John is gone; and then, if you are quite certain about it, make the usual signal. Do not be alarmed; don't talk to me of the snow or tell me that my footsteps will be seen. This time it is not I who will go to you, but you who must come to me. Do you understand? — you can safely go to walk in the park, and no one will notice the tracks of your little footsteps.

Put on your warmest shawl and your thickest furs. Then we will spend an hour in the boat under the willows and change characters for once. Usually I tell you my hopes and you tell me your fears; to-morrow, my darling Amélie, you shall tell me your hopes, and I must tell you my fears.

Only be sure to come out as soon as you have made the signal. I will await it at Montagnac, and from Montagnac to the Reyssouse it will not take a love like mine five minutes to come to you.

Au revoir, my poor Amélie; alas! if you had never met me you would have been the happiest of the happy. Fatality placed me in your path, and I have made a martyr of you.

YOUR CHARLES.

P. S. — To-morrow, without fail; unless some insurmountable difficulty prevents.

XXI.

IN WHICH MORGAN'S PRESENTIMENTS ARE JUSTIFIED.

It often happens that the skies are never so calm or so serene as before a storm. The day was beautiful and still, — one of those glorious days of February when, in spite of the tingling cold of the atmosphere, in spite of a winding-sheet of snow about the earth, the sun smiles down upon mankind with a promise of spring.

Sir John came at twelve o'clock to make his farewell visit to Amélie. He had, or thought he had, her promise, and that satisfied him. His impatience was altogether personal; but Amélie, by accepting his suit, even though she relegated the period of their marriage to the vaguest future, had crowned his hopes. He trusted to the First Consul, and to Roland's friendship for the rest. He therefore returned to Paris to do much of his courtship with Madame de Montrevel, not being able to remain at Bourg and carry it on with Amélie.

A quarter of an hour after he had left the château des Noires-Fontaines Charlotte was on her way to Bourg. Soon after four she returned, bringing word that she had seen Sir John with her own eyes at the door of the hôtel de France, getting into his travelling carriage, which took the road to Mâcon. Amélie could therefore feel perfectly at ease on that score. She breathed freer. But she had tried to inspire Morgan with a peace of mind she did not feel. Since the day when Charlotte brought back the news of Roland's presence at Bourg she had had a presentiment like that of Morgan himself, that some terrible event was approaching. She knew all that had happened at the Chartreuse of Seillon. She foresaw the

struggle between her brother and her lover, and with her mind at rest as to her brother, thanks to the protection of Morgan, she, knowing Roland's character, trembled for the life of her lover.

Moreover, she had heard of the stoppage of the Chambéry mail-coach, and the death of the colonel of chasseurs. She also knew that her brother had been saved, but that nothing was known of him since then. She had received no letter from him herself. This disappearance and this silence, to her who knew her brother so well, was even worse than open and declared war. As for Morgan, she had not seen him since the scene we have narrated, in which she bound herself to send him weapons, wherever he might be, in case he were condemned to death.

The interview Morgan now desired was awaited by Amélie with an impatience equal to his own. As soon as she could think that Michel and his son were in bed, she lit the four windows with candles, as the expected signal to Morgan. Then, following her lover's entreaty, she wrapped herself in a cashmere shawl which Roland had brought her from the battlefield of the Pyramids (having unrolled it from the head of a bey whom he killed). Over this she flung a furred mantle, left Charlotte behind to inform her of what happened, and trusting that nothing would happen, she opened the park gate and went toward the river.

During that day she had several times walked to the river and back in order to tread a line of footsteps, among which the nocturnal ones might not be noticed. She now went, if not tranquilly, at least boldly, down the slope which led to the river. Once there, she looked about her for the boat under the willows. It was there, and a man in it, who was Morgan. With two strokes of his oar he reached a spot on the bank where it was possible to get down. Amélie sprang, and he caught her in his arms.

The first thing the young girl noticed was the joyous radiance which illuminated, if we may say so, the face of her lover.

"Oh!" she cried, "you have something good to tell me."

"What makes you think so, dearest?" asked Morgan, with his tenderest smile.

"There is something on your face, my own Charles, something more than the mere happiness of seeing me — "

"You are right," said Morgan, throwing the boat-chain round the trunk of a willow, and letting the oars float idly beside the boat. Then taking Amélie in his arms, "You were right," he said, "my presentiments were mistaken. Oh! blind and faithless beings that we are, it is at the very moment when happiness is coming to us that we despair and doubt!"

"Tell me, tell me!" cried Amélie. "What has happened?"

"Do you remember, my Amélie, how you answered me the last time we met, when I asked you to fly, and feared your repugnance to take the step?"

"Yes, I remember, Charles. I said I was yours, and though I felt that repugnance I would conquer it."

"And I replied that I had engagements which would hinder me from leaving the country; that I was bound to others, and they to me; that our duty was to one man, to whom we owed absolute obedience, — the future king of France, Louis XVIII."

"Yes, you said all that."

"Well, we are now released from such pledges, not only by the king, but by our general Georges Cadoudal."

"Oh, my friend! Then you will once more be as other men, only above all others!"

"No, I shall become a simple exile, Amélie. There is no hope of our being included in the Breton and Vendéan amnesty."

"Why not?"

"We are not soldiers, my darling. We are not even rebels. We are The Company of Jehu."

Amélie sighed.

"We are brigands, bandits, robbers," said Morgan, dwelling on the words with evident intention.

"Hush!" said Amélie, laying her hand on her lover's mouth. "Hush! do not speak of that. Tell me how it is that your king has released you, and the general also."

"The First Consul wished to see Cadoudal. First he sent your brother to make him certain proposals. Cadoudal refused to come to terms; but he, like ourselves, received orders from Louis XVIII. to cease hostilities. Simultaneously with that order came another message from the First Consul to Cadoudal. It was, in fact, a safe-conduct for the Vendéan general, and an invitation to go to Paris. In fact an overture from one power to another power. Cadoudal has accepted, and is now on his way to Paris. If this is not peace, it is, at any rate, a truce."

"Oh! what joy, my Charles!"

"But don't rejoice too much, dear love."

"Why not?"

"Because M. Fouché is a long-headed man. He knows that as he could not conquer us it was necessary to dishonor us. He has organized false Companies of Jehu, and sent them into Maine and Anjou, where they not only rob the coaches of the government money, but they pillage and rob the passengers, enter the châteaux and farmhouses at night, and roast the feet of the owners to make them tell where their money is hidden. Well, these men, these scoundrels, robbers, *chauffeurs*, take our name, and pretend to fight for our principles, so that M. Fouché and his police declare that we are not only beyond the pale of law, but beyond that of honor."

"Oh!"

"That is what I wish to tell you, my Amélie, before I again ask you to fly with me. In the eyes of France, in the eyes of foreigners, in the eyes of even the prince whom we have served, and for whom we have risked the scaffold, we shall be hereafter and probably are now dishonored men, who are worthy of the scaffold."

"Maybe; but to me, my Charles, you are a man of conviction, a devoted soul, the firm royalist, continuing to

struggle for a cause when other men abandon it. To me you are the loyal Comte de Sainte-Hermine, or, if you like it better, you are to me the noble, brave, invincible Morgan."

"Ah! that is what I longed to hear, my beloved. If you feel thus, in spite of the cloud of infamy they have dragged between us and honor, you will not hesitate — I will not say to give yourself to me, for that you have done, but — to be my wife before the world."

"Hesitate? — no, not for a moment; not for a second. To do it is joy, the joy of my soul, the happiness of my life! Your wife? I am your wife in the sight of God, and God will have granted my every prayer on the day when he enables me to be your wife before men."

Morgan fell on his knees.

"Then," he said, "here, at your feet, Amélie, with clasped hands and my whole heart supplicating, I say to you, Amélie, will you fly with me? Will you leave France with me? Will you be my wife in other lands?"

Amélie sprang up, erect, and took her head in her hands, as though the force of her blood rushing to the brain threatened to burst it. Morgan caught both her hands, and looked at her anxiously.

"Do you hesitate?" he asked in a muffled, trembling, broken voice.

"No, no, not an instant!" she cried, resolutely. "I am yours, in the past, in the present, here, everywhere. Only, the thought convulses me. It is so unexpected."

"Reflect upon it, my Amélie. It is the sacrifice of family and country, all that is dear to you, all that is sacred. If you follow me you leave the home where you were born, the mother who nurtured you, the brother who loves you, and who, perhaps, when he hears you are the wife of a brigand will hate you. He will certainly despise you."

As he spoke, Morgan's eyes were anxiously questioning Amélie's face. Over that face came gradually a tender

smile, and then it turned from heaven to earth, and bent to that of Morgan, who was still on his knees.

"Oh, Charles!" she murmured in a voice soft as the flowing of the clear and limpid river at her feet, "the love that comes direct from the Divine is powerful indeed, since in spite of your terrible words, I say to you, without fear, without hesitation, almost without regrets: Charles, I am ready, Charles, I am yours. When shall we go?"

"Amélie, our fate is not one to discuss. We must act. If we go, if you go with me, it must be at once. To-morrow we must be across the frontier."

"How do we go?"

"I have two horses, ready saddled at Montagnac, one for you, Amélie, one for me. I have letters of credit for two hundred thousand francs on London and Vienna. We will go wherever you like best."

"Where you are, Charles, there I am best. What care I for country or city!"

"Then come."

"Can I have five minutes, Charles? Is it too much?"

"Where are you going?"

"To say good-bye to many things, to fetch your precious letters and the ivory chaplet I used at my first communion. Oh! there are many sacred, cherished souvenirs of my childhood, which would remind me *over there* of my mother, of France. I will fetch them and return."

"Amélie!"

"What is it?"

"I cannot leave you. If I part with you for an instant now I feel that I shall lose you forever. Let me go with you?"

"Yes, come. What matters it who sees us now! We shall be far enough away to-morrow. Come!"

The young man sprang from the boat and gave Amélie his hand to lift her out. Then he folded his arm about her, and they walked toward the house.

On the portico Charles stopped.

"Go on alone," he said; "memory is a chaste thing. I know that, and I will not embarrass you by my presence. I will wait here and watch for you. So long as I know you are close by me I do not fear to lose you. Go, dear, and come back quickly."

Amélie answered with a kiss. Then she ran up hastily to her room, took the little coffer of carved oak clamped with iron, her treasury, which contained her lover's letters from the first to the last, unfastened from the mirror above the fireplace the white and virginal chaplet that hung there; put into her belt a watch her mother had given her, and passed into Madame de Montrevel's bed-chamber. There she stooped and kissed the pillow where her mother's head had lain, knelt before the Christ at the foot of the bed, began a thanksgiving she dared not finish, changed it to a prayer, then suddenly stopped, — she fancied Charles was calling her.

She listened, and heard her name a second time, uttered in a tone of agony she could not understand. The girl quivered, sprang to her feet, and ran downstairs.

Charles was still where she had left him; but his head was lowered, his ears straining, as though he were listening anxiously to a distant sound.

"What is it?" cried Amélie, seizing his hand.

"Listen, listen!" he said.

Amélie strained her ears to catch the sound, which seemed to her like that of musketry. It came from the direction of Ceyzeriat.

"Oh!" cried Morgan, "I was right in doubting my happiness to the last. My friends are attacked. Adieu, Amélie, adieu!"

"Adieu! what?" cried Amélie, turning pale, "will you leave me?"

The sound of the firing grew more distinct.

"Don't you hear? They are fighting, and I am not there to fight with them."

Daughter and sister of a soldier, Amélie understood him, and she made no resistance.

"Go!" she said, letting her arms drop beside her. "You were right; we are lost."

The young man uttered a cry of rage, caught her to his breast, and pressed her to him as though he would smother her. Then bounding from the portico, he rushed in the direction of the firing with the speed of a deer pursued by hunters.

"I come! I come, friends!" he shouted.

Then he disappeared like a shadow beneath the trees of the park.

Amélie fell on her knees, her arms stretched toward him, but without the strength to recall him, or, if she did so, it was in so faint a voice that Morgan did not stop or even check his speed to answer her.

XXII.

ROLAND'S REVENGE.

It is easy to guess what had happened. Roland had not wasted his time with the captain of gendarmes and the colonel of dragoons.

They, on their side, did not forget they had their own revenge to take. Roland had informed them of the subterranean passage which led from the church of Brou to the grotto of Ceyzeriat.

At nine in the evening the captain and eighteen of his men were to enter the church, go down into the burial vault of the Dukes of Savoie, and prevent with their bayonets all escape from the quarry through the subterranean passage.

Roland, at the head of twenty dragoons, was to enclose the wood in a semi-circle, drawing in until the two ends of the half-circle should meet at the grotto of Ceyzeriat. The first movement of this party was to be made at nine o'clock, in combination with that of the captain of gendarmerie.

We have seen, from what Morgan told Amélie, the nature of the present intentions of The Company of Jehu. The news brought from Mittau and from Brittany had put them at ease. Each man felt that he was free, and knowing that the struggle had been a hopeless one, he rejoiced in his liberty. There was therefore a full meeting in the grotto of Ceyzeriat, and it was like a fête. At twelve o'clock The Company of Jehu were to separate, and each man, according to his facilities, was to cross the frontier and leave France. We know how their leader employed his last moments. The others, who had not the same

ties of the heart, were supping together in the broad open space of the quarry, brilliantly illuminated, — a feast of separation and farewell; for once out of France, La Vendée and Brittany pacificated, Condé's army destroyed, God alone knew when and where they should meet again in foreign lands.

Suddenly a shot was fired.

As if by an electric shock every man sprang to his feet. A second shot, and then through the depths of the quarry rang the cry, quivering like the wings of a bird of ill-omen, "To arms!"

To this Company of Jehu, subject to all the vicissitudes of an outlawed life, the occasional rest they snatched was never that of peace. Pistols, carbines, and daggers were ever near at hand. At the cry "To arms!" given no doubt by the sentinel, each man sprang to his weapons and stood with panting breast and strained ears, waiting.

In the midst of the silence the sound of a step as rapid as well could be in the darkness was heard. Then, within the circle of light thrown by the torches a man appeared.

"To arms!" he cried again, "we are attacked!"

The two shots the Company had heard were from the double-barrelled gun of the sentry, fired as a warning. It was he who now appeared, his smoking gun in his hand.

"Where is Morgan?" cried twenty voices.

"Absent," replied Montbar, "consequently I command. Put out the lights and retreat to the church. A fight is useless now. It would only be a waste of blood."

He was obeyed with an alacrity which showed that every one saw the danger. The little company drew together in the darkness.

Montbar, to whom the windings of the subterranean passage were as well known as they were to Morgan, directed the troop, and plunged, followed by the rest, into the heart of the quarry. Suddenly, as he neared the gate of the passage, he fancied he heard an order given in a low

voice not fifty feet before him, then a sound like the cocking of guns. He stretched out both arms and muttered in a low voice, "Halt!"

At the same instant came the command in a clear voice, "Fire!"

It was hardly given before the passage was lighted with a glare, followed by a fearful volley. Ten carbines were discharged at once in the narrow way. By the glare Montbar and his companions recognized the uniform of the gendarmes.

"Fire!" cried Montbar in turn.

Seven or eight shots answered the command. Again the darkness was lighted. Two of the Company of Jehu were down, one shot dead, the other mortally wounded.

"Retreat is cut off!" said Montbar, "to the right-about, friends. If we have a chance it is through the forest."

The movement was made with the precision of a military manœuvre. Montbar was again at the head of his companions, and they all retraced their steps. At that instant the gendarmes fired again. No answer was made. Those who had discharged their guns reloaded them. Those who had not yet fired reserved their charge for the real struggle which would take place, as they well knew, at the entrance of the grotto. One or two sighs alone told that the last volley of the gendarmerie had not been fruitless.

In about five minutes Montbar stopped. The little party were now beyond the open space in the quarry.

"Are the guns and pistols all loaded?" he asked.

"Yes," said a dozen voices.

"Remember the orders for those of us who may fall into the hands of the law. We belong to the army of M. de Teyssonnet, and we are here to recruit men for the royalist cause. If they talk to us of the mail-coaches and diligences, we know nothing about them."

"Agreed."

"In either case it will be death. We know that well enough; but the death of a soldier is better than the

death of thieves, — the volley of a platoon instead of the guillotine."

"Yes, yes! and we know what it is," cried a cheerful voice, "Vive la fusillade!"

"Forward, friends!" said Montbar, "and let us sell our lives for what they are worth, — that is to say, as dear as possible."

"Forward!" they all cried.

Then, as rapidly as it was possible to move in the deep darkness, the little band resumed its march, still led by Montbar. As they advanced the leader noticed a smell of smoke which alarmed him. At the same time certain gleams began to flicker on the granite walls at the angles of the paths, showing that something strange was happening at the entrance of the quarry.

"I think the scoundrels are smoking us out!" he said.

"I fear so," replied Adler.

"They think we are foxes."

"Ha!" replied the same voice, "they shall know by our claws we are lions."

The smoke became thicker and thicker, the gleams stronger and more vivid.

They turned the last corner. A pile of dried wood had been lighted in the quarry about fifty feet from the entrance, not for the smoke, but for the light it gave. By the blaze of that savage hearth the weapons of the dragoons were seen to gleam around the opening.

Ten steps in advance of the men an officer stood waiting, leaning on his carbine, not only exposed to attack, but seeming to court it. It was Roland. He was easily recognized. He had flung his cap away, and his head was bare. The fitful dance of the flame played upon his features. But that which otherwise would have lost him saved him. Montbar recognized him and stepped backward.

"Roland de Montrevel!" he said, "remember Morgan's entreaty."

"Yes," said the other Companions in muffled tones.

"And now," cried Montbar, "let us die, but dearly!"

He sprang forward into the space illuminated by the fire, discharging one barrel of his gun at the dragoons, who replied by a general volley.

It is impossible to relate what now took place. The grotto was filled with smoke, in the midst of which the fire of each weapon pierced like a flash of lightning. The two bands met and fought hand to hand, pistols and daggers serving them. At the noise of the struggle the gendarmes poured in from the rear, — a few more demons were added to this fight of devils, — but they dared not fire, for friends as well as enemies were before them. Confused groups struggled in the red and lurid atmosphere, fell down, rose, and fell again, a roar of rage was heard, a cry of agony, — the death sigh of a man. Then the survivor sought another adversary and began another struggle.

The work of death lasted fifteen minutes, perhaps twenty. At the end of those twenty minutes twenty corpses could be counted in the grotto of Ceyzeriat. Thirteen were those of the troops and the gendarmes, nine of The Company of Jehu. Five of the latter were still living; crushed by numbers, crippled by wounds, they were taken alive. The gendarmes and soldiers, twenty-five in number, surrounded them.

The captain of gendarmes had his arm shattered, and the colonel of dragoons was wounded in the thigh. Roland alone, covered with blood, a blood not his own, was without a scratch. Two of the prisoners were grievously wounded. It was impossible to make them walk. They were carried on improvised litters. Torches were lighted, and the whole troop, with the prisoners, took the road to the town.

At the moment when they left the forest and took to the high-road the gallop of a horse was heard. It came on rapidly.

"Go on!" said Roland. "I will stay here and see what this means."

It was a rider who, as we have said, was advancing at full speed.

"Who goes there?" cried Roland, raising his carbine, when the horseman was about twenty paces from him.

"One more prisoner, Monsieur de Montrevel," replied the rider. "I could not be in the fight, but I will at least go to the scaffold. Where are my friends?"

"There, monsieur," replied Roland, who recognized, not the face, but the voice of the young man, a voice he had now heard three times. He pointed as he spoke to the prisoners placed in the centre of the little troop which was making its way along the road between Ceyzeriat and Bourg.

"I am glad to see that no harm has happened to you, Monsieur de Montrevel," said the young man, courteously; "I assure you it is a cause of great happiness to me." Spurring his horse, a few strides brought him to the soldiers and gendarmes. "Pardon me, gentlemen," he said, springing from his horse; "I claim a place among my three friends, the Vicomte de Jayat, the Comte de Valensolle, and the Marquis de Ribier."

The three prisoners gave a cry of admiration, and held out their hands to their friend. The two wounded men lifted themselves up on their litters and murmured: —

"Well done, Sainte-Hermine! well done!"

"I do believe, God help me!" cried Roland, "that those brigands will have the nobler side of the affair!"

XXIII.

CADOUDAL AT THE TUILERIES.

The night but one after the day on which the events we have just related took place, two men were walking side by side, and up and down the grand salon of the Tuileries, facing the garden. They were talking eagerly, accompanying their words with hasty and animated gestures.

These men were the First Consul Bonaparte and Georges Cadoudal.

Cadoudal, moved by the misery that might be entailed on Brittany by longer resistance, had just signed a peace with Brune. It was after the signing of this peace that he released The Company of Jehu from their obligations. Unhappily, this release reached them, as we have seen, twenty-four hours too late.

When treating with Brune, Cadoudal had asked nothing for himself but the liberty to go immediately to England. But Brune had so earnestly urged him, that Cadoudal finally consented to a personal interview with the First Consul. He had, consequently, come to Paris. The morning of his arrival he went to the Tuileries, gave in his name, and was received at once. It was Rapp who, in Roland's absence, introduced him. As the aide-de-camp withdrew he was careful to leave both doors open, so as to see everything from Bourrienne's room, and be able to go to the assistance of the First Consul if necessary.

But Bonaparte, who perfectly understood Rapp's motive, walked to the doors and shut them. Then, returning quickly to Cadoudal, —

"Ah! so it is you at last!" he exclaimed. "I am very glad to see you. One of your enemies, my aide-de-camp, Roland de Montrevel, told me many fine things of you."

"I am not surprised," replied Cadoudal; "during the short time I saw M. de Montrevel I recognized a most chivalrous nature in him."

"Yes, and that touched you?" said the First Consul. Then fixing his falcon eye on the royalist chief, he continued: "Hear me, Georges: I need energetic men to accomplish the work I have undertaken; will you be one of them? I have already offered you the rank of colonel; but you are worth more than that. I now offer you the rank and place of general of division."

"I thank you from the depths of my heart, citizen First Consul," replied Cadoudal, "but you would despise me if I accepted."

"Why so?" asked Bonaparte, quickly.

"Because I have pledged myself to the house of Bourbon; and I shall continue faithful to it under all circumstances."

"Let us discuss this matter," said the First Consul. "Is there no way to bind you to me?"

"General," replied the royalist officer, "am I permitted to repeat to you what has been told to me?"

"Why not?"

"Because it touches upon the deepest political interests."

"Pooh, some nonsense!" exclaimed the First Consul, with an uneasy smile.

Cadoudal stopped short and looked fixedly at his questioner.

"It is said that an agreement was made at Alexandria between you and Commodore Sidney Smith, the purport of which was to allow you to return to France, on the condition, accepted by you, of restoring the throne to our former kings."

Bonaparte burst out laughing.

"How amazing you are, you plebeians," he said, "with

your love for your former kings! Suppose that I did re-establish the throne (a thing I have not the smallest desire to do, I assure you), what return will you get, you who have shed your blood for that cause? Not even the confirmation of the rank you have won in it, colonel! Have you ever known in the royalist armies a colonel who was not a noble? Did you ever hear that any man rose by his merits into that class of people? Whereas with me, Georges, you can attain to what you will. The higher I raise myself, the higher I shall raise those who surround me. As for seeing me play the part of Monk, dismiss that idea from your mind. Monk lived in an age in which the prejudices we fought and overthrew in 1789 were in full force. If Monk had wished to make himself king he could not have done so. Dictator? no; it needed a Cromwell for that. Richard could not maintain himself. It is true that he was the genuine son of a great man, — in other words, a fool. If I had wished to make myself king there was nothing to hinder me; and if ever the wish takes me to do so nothing will hinder me. Now, you have something to say to that; say it."

"You tell me, citizen First Consul, that the situation in France in 1800 is not the same as that of England in 1660. I myself see no difference. Charles I. was beheaded in 1649; Louis XVI. in 1793. Eleven years elapsed in England between the death of the king and the restoration of his son. Seven years have elapsed in France since the death of Louis XVI. Will you tell me that the English revolution was a religious one, whereas the French revolution was a political one? To that I reply that a charter is as easy to make as an abjuration."

Bonaparte smiled.

"No," he said, "I should not tell you that. I should say to you simply this: Cromwell was fifty years of age when Charles I. was executed. I was twenty-four at the death of Louis XVI. Cromwell died in 1658, that is, at the age of fifty-nine. In ten years of power he had time

to undertake much, but to accomplish little. Besides, his reform was a total one, — a vast political reform by its substitution of a republican government for a monarchical one. Well, grant that I live to Cromwell's age, fifty-nine; that is not too much to expect; I shall still have twenty years to live, just the double of Cromwell. And remark, I change nothing, I progress; I do not overthrow, I build up. Suppose that Cæsar, at thirty years of age, instead of being merely the first roué in Rome, had been Rome's greatest citizen; suppose his campaign in Gaul was over, his campaign in Egypt made, his campaign in Spain brought to a happy end; suppose that he was thirty then instead of fifty, — don't you think he would have been both Cæsar and Augustus?"

"Yes, unless he found Brutus, Cassius, and Casca on his path."

"So," said Bonaparte, sadly, "my enemies are reckoning on assassination, are they? In that case, the thing is easy, and you, my enemy, have the first chance. What hinders you at this moment, if you feel like Brutus, from striking me as he struck Cæsar? I am alone with you. The doors are shut. You have time enough to finish me before any one can touch you."

Cadoudal made a step backward.

"No," he said, "we are not reckoning on murder, and I think our extremity must be great indeed before any of us would make himself a murderer; but there are chances in war. A single reverse would destroy your prestige. One defeat would bring the enemy into the heart of France. The camp-fires of the Austrians can already be seen from the frontiers of Provence. A cannon-ball may take off your head as it did that of Marshal Berwick, and then what becomes of France? You have no children, and your brothers — "

"Oh!" cried Bonaparte, "from that point of view you are right enough; but, if you don't believe in Providence, I do. I believe that nothing happens by chance. I believe

that when, on the 15th of August, 1769 (one year, day for day, after Louis XV. issued the decree reuniting Corsica to France), there was born in Ajaccio a child who should bring about the 13th Vendémiaire and the 18th Brumaire, Providence had great designs, mighty projects in view for that child. I am that child. If I have a mission, I fear nothing. My mission is my buckler. If I have no mission, if I am mistaken, if instead of living the twenty-five or thirty years I need to accomplish my work, I am stabbed to the heart like Cæsar, or knocked over by a cannon-ball like Berwick, Providence will have had its reasons for so acting, and on Providence will rest the duty of providing for France. We spoke just now of Cæsar. When Rome followed his body, mourning, and burned the houses of his murderers, when the Eternal City turned its eyes to the four quarters of the globe, asking whence would come the genius to stay her civil wars, when she trembled at the sight of drunken Anthony and treacherous Lepidus, she never thought of the pupil of Apollonius, the nephew of Cæsar, the young Octavius. Who then remembered that son of the Velletri banker, whitened with the flour of his ancestors? Who imagined, when he came limping and blinking to review the old legions of Cæsar what he was? No one; not even the far-sighted Cicero: *Ornandum et tollendum*, he said. Well, that lad fooled all the graybeards of the Senate, and reigned almost as long as Louis XIV. Georges, Georges, don't struggle against Providence which created me, or Providence will destroy you."

"Then I shall be destroyed while following the path and the religion of my fathers," replied Cadoudal, bowing low, "and I hope that God will pardon my error, which will be that of a fervent Christian and a faithful son."

Bonaparte laid his hand on the shoulder of the young chieftain.

"So be it," he said; "but at least remain neuter. Leave events to complete themselves. Watch the thrones as

they rock, the crowns as they fall. Usually, spectators pay for a show. I will pay you to look on."

"And what will you pay me for that, citizen First Consul?" said Cadoudal, laughing.

"A hundred thousand francs a year," replied Bonaparte.

"If you give a hundred thousand francs a year to one poor rebel leader," said Cadoudal, "what would you give to the prince for whom he fought?"

"Nothing, monsieur. What I pay for in you is courage, and not the principle on which you act. I prove to you that I, man of my own works, judge men solely by their works. Accept, Georges; accept, I entreat you."

"What if I refuse?"

"You will do wrong."

"Am I free to depart when I please?"

Bonaparte went to the door and opened it.

"Aide-de-camp on duty!" he called.

He expected to see Rapp. He saw Roland.

"Ah!" he cried, "is it you!" Then returning to Cadoudal, he said: "I need not present to you my aide-de-camp, Roland de Montrevel. He is already one of your acquaintances. Roland, tell the colonel that he is as free in Paris as you were in his camp at Muzillac, and that if he desires a passport for any country in the world, Fouché has orders to give it to him."

"Your word suffices, citizen First Consul," replied Cadoudal, bowing, "I leave to-night."

"Is it allowable to ask where you are going?"

"To London, general."

"So much the better."

"Why so much the better?"

"Because you will be near the men for whom you have fought."

"And then?"

"Then, when you have seen them —"

"What?"

"You will compare them with the men against whom you fought. But, once out of France, colonel — "

Bonaparte stopped.

"I am listening," said Cadoudal.

"Once out of France," resumed Bonaparte, "do not return without informing me, or be not surprised if I treat you as an enemy."

"That will be doing me an honor, general. In so treating me you will show that you consider me a man to be feared."

So saying, Cadoudal bowed to the First Consul and withdrew.

"Well, general," asked Roland the moment the door had closed on the Breton leader, "is he the man I represented him to be?"

"Yes," said Bonaparte, thoughtfully, "only he sees things awry; but the exaggeration of his ideas has its rise in noble sentiments which must give him immense influence among his own people." Then he added, in a low voice: "But we must make an end of him. And you," he said to Roland, "what have you been doing?"

"Making an end of my work, too," replied Roland.

"Ah, ha! so then The Company of Jehu — "

"No longer exists. Three-fourths are dead, the rest prisoners."

"And you safe and sound?"

"Don't speak of it, general. I do verily believe I have a compact with the devil."

The same evening Cadoudal, as he had said, left Paris for England. On receiving the news that the Breton leader was in London, Louis XVIII. wrote him the following letter: —

I have learned with the greatest satisfaction, general, that you have at last *escaped* from the hands of the tyrant who misconceived you so far as to offer you service under him. I mourn the unhappy circumstances which obliged you to treat with him ; but I did not feel the slightest uneasiness ; the heart of my faithful Bretons, and

yours in particular, are too well known to me. To-day you are free, you are near my brother, all my hopes revive. I need not say more to a Frenchman such as you.

Louis.

To this letter was added a lieutenant-general's commission and the grand cordon of Saint-Louis.

XXIV.

THE ARMY OF THE RESERVES.

The First Consul had reached a point he desired. The Company of Jehu were destroyed, and La Vendée was pacificated.

While demanding peace from England, he hoped for war. He understood very well that, born of war, he could live only by war. He seemed to foresee that a poet would arise and call him the "Giant of Battles."

But war, — what war? Where and how should he wage it? An article in the constitution of the year VIII. forbade the First Consul to command the armies or to leave France. In all constitutions there is inevitably some absurd provision. Happy the constitutions that have but one! The First Consul found a means to evade this particular absurdity.

He established a camp at Dijon. The army which occupied this camp was called the Army of the Reserves. The nucleus of this army was the force now withdrawn from Brittany and La Vendée, thirty thousand men or thereabouts. Twenty thousand conscripts were added; General Berthier was appointed commander-in-chief. The plan which Bonaparte explained to Roland one day in his study at the Luxembourg was still working in his mind. He expected to recover Italy by a single battle, but that battle must be a mighty victory.

Moreau, as a reward for his co-operation on the 18th Brumaire, obtained the military command he so much desired. He was made general-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine, with eight thousand men under him. Angereau, with twenty-five thousand more, was on the Dutch fron-

tier And Masséna, commanding the Army of Italy, had withdrawn to the country about Genoa, where he was tenaciously maintaining himself in the city against the besieging land forces of the Austrian General Ott, and the British fleet under Admiral Keith.

While the latter movements were taking place in Italy, Moreau had taken the offensive on the Rhine, and defeated the enemy at Stockach and Moeskirch. A single victory was to give an excuse to put the Army of the Reserves under waiting orders. Two victories would leave no doubt as to the necessity for co-operation. Only, was it certain that this army would be called to Italy?

Bonaparte's first thought was to march up the Valais and cross the Simplon. He would thus turn Piedmont, and enter Milan. But the operation was a long one, and must be done overtly. Bonaparte renounced it. His plan was to surprise the Austrians, and to appear with his whole army on the plains of Piedmont before it was even suspected that he had crossed the Alps. He then decided to make the passage of the Great Saint-Bernard. It was for this that he sent the fifty thousand francs, seized by The Company of Jehu, to the monks, whose monastery crowns that mountain. Another fifty thousand francs had since been sent, which reached their destination safely. By the help of this money the monastery was to be amply provisioned for an army of fifty thousand men halting there for one day.

Consequently, toward the end of April the whole of the artillery was advanced to Lauzanne, Villeneuve, Martigny, and Saint-Pierre. General Marmont, commanding the artillery, had already been sent forward to find a means of transporting cannon across the Alps. It was almost an impracticable thing to do; yet it must be done. No precedent existed as a guide. Hannibal, with his elephants and Numidians and Gauls; Charlemagne, with his Franks, had no such obstacles to surmount. During the campaign in Italy in 1796 the army had not crossed the

Alps, but turned them, descending from Nice to Cerasco by the Corniche road. This time a truly titanic work was undertaken.

In the first place, was the mountain unoccupied? A mountain without Austrians was difficult enough to conquer, — with them, impossible. Lannes was despatched, like a forlorn hope, with a whole division. He crossed the col of the Saint-Bernard without artillery or baggage, and took possession of Châtillon. He reported that the Austrians had left no troops in Piedmont, except the cavalry in barracks, and a few posts of observation. There were no obstacles to contend with but those of nature. Operations were at once begun.

Sledges had been made to transport the guns; but narrow as they might be, they were still too wide for the road. Some other means must be devised. The trunks of pines were hollowed, and the guns inserted. At one end was a rope to haul them, at the other end a tiller to guide them. Twenty grenadiers took the cable. Twenty others carried the baggage of those who drew the guns. An artillery-man commanded each detachment, with absolute power, if needed, over life and death. The iron mass, in such a case, was far more precious than the flesh of men.

Before starting, each man received a pair of new shoes and twenty biscuits. Each put on his shoes and hung the biscuits round his neck. The First Consul, stationed at the foot of the mountain, gave to each cannon the word to start.

A man must traverse the same roads as a tourist, on foot or mule-back, he must plunge his eye to the depths of those precipices, before he can have any idea of what this crossing was, — up, always up those beetling slopes, by narrow paths, on jagged stones, which cut the shoes first, the feet next!

From time to time they stopped, drew breath, and again went on without a murmur. The ice-zone was reached Before attempting it, the men received new shoes; those

of the morning were in shreds. A biscuit was eaten, a drop of brandy from the canteen swallowed, and on they went. No man knew where he was rising. Some asked how many more days it would take; others, if they might stop for a moment at the moon. At last they came to the eternal snows. There the toil was less, — the gun-logs slid upon the snow; they went faster.

One fact will show the power given to the artillery-man who commanded each gun. General Chamberlhac passed. He thought the advance not fast enough. Wishing to hasten it he spoke to an artillery-man in a tone of authority.

"You are not in command here," replied the man; "I am. I am responsible for that gun; I direct its march. Pass on."

The general approached the artillery-man as if to take him by the throat. But the man stepped back, saying:

"General, don't touch me, or I will send you to the bottom of that precipice with a blow of this tiller."

After unheard-of toil they reached the foot of the last rise, at the summit of which stands the convent. There they found traces of Lannes. As the slope was very steep, his soldiers had cut a sort of stairway in the ice. The men now scaled it. The Fathers of Saint-Bernard were awaiting them on the level space. As each gun came up the men were taken by squads into the hospice. Tables were set along the passage. On them were bread and Gruyère cheese and wine.

When they left the convent the soldiers pressed the hands of the monks, and kissed their dogs.

The descent at first seemed easier than the ascent, and the officers declared it was their turn to drag the guns. But now the cannon outran their teams. The latter were dragged down faster than they willed. General Lannes and his division were still in the advance. He had reached the valley before the rest of the army, entered Aosta, and received his orders to advance on Ivrea at the

entrance of the plains of Piedmont. There, however, he encountered an obstacle which no one had foreseen. This was the fort of Bard.

The village of Bard is situated about twenty-four miles from Aosta. On the road from Ivrea, a little behind the village, a small hill closes the valley almost hermetically. The River Dora flows between this hill and the mountain on the right. The river, or rather the torrent, fills the whole intervale. The mountain on the left presents very much the same aspect; only, instead of the river, it is the high-road which passes between the hill and the mountain. It is here that the fortress of Bard is built. It stands on the summit of the hill, and spreads down one side of it toward the high-road.

How happened it that no one had thought of this obstacle, which was well-nigh insurmountable? There was no way to assault it from the bottom of the valley, and it was impossible to scale the rocks above it. Yet, by dint of searching, they did find a path which it was possible to level sufficiently for the cavalry and infantry to pass; but they tried in vain to get the artillery over it, although they took the guns from their carriages, as on the Mont Saint-Bernard.

Bonaparte ordered two cannon levelled on the fortress and opened fire on the works; but it was soon seen that these guns had no effect. Moreover, a cannon-ball from the fort buried itself in one of the two cannon, and shattered it. The First Consul then ordered an assault by storm. Columns formed in the villages and, supplied with scaling ladders, dashed up at a run, and reached the fort at several points; but to insure success, not only celerity, but silence was needed. It ought to have been a surprise; but Colonel Dufour, who commanded one column, ordered the charge to be sounded, and marched boldly to the assault. The column was repulsed, and the colonel had a ball through his body.

Then a company of picked marksmen were chosen.

They were supplied with provisions and cartridges, and they crept between the rocks until they reached a ledge, from which they commanded the fort. From this ledge could be seen another, less high, but equally overlooking the fort. To this they contrived, with extreme difficulty, to hoist two guns, with which they formed a battery. These two pieces on one side, and the sharpshooters on the other, began to make the enemy uneasy.

During this time General Marmont proposed to the First Consul a plan so bold that the enemy would never suspect it. It was nothing less than to move the artillery at night along the high-road, notwithstanding that the fort could rake it. Manure, and wool from all the mattresses to be found in the villages were spread upon the road. The wheels and chains and all resounding parts of the gun carriages were swathed in hay. The horses to the guns and caissons were taken out, and fifty men to each carriage took their places. This latter precaution had two advantages: first, the horses might neigh, while the men had every interest in keeping a dead silence; and secondly, a dead horse will stop a whole convoy, whereas a dead man, not being fastened to the traces, can be pushed aside, and his place taken without even stopping the march. In charge of each carriage or caisson were an officer and a subordinate officer of artillery, to whom six hundred francs were promised for the transport of each gun or waggon beyond the range of the fort.

General Marmont, who had proposed the plan, superintended the first operation himself. Happily a storm prevailed, and made the night extremely dark. The first six cannon, and the first six caissons passed without a single shot from the fort. The men returned, picking their steps silently, one after another in single file; but this time the enemy must have heard some noise, and wishing to know the cause, threw hand grenades. Fortunately they fell beyond the road.

Why should these men, who had once passed, return?

Merely to get their muskets and knapsacks. This might have been avoided had the muskets and knapsacks been stowed on the caissons; but no one can think of everything, and, as it proved, no one in the fort at Bard thought at all. As soon as the possibility of the passage was shown, the transport of the artillery became a duty like any other; only, now that the enemy were warned of it, it was dangerous. The fort seemed like a volcano belching flames and smoke; but, in consequence of the vertical direction in which it was forced to fire, it really made more noise than it did harm. Five or six men were killed to each waggon, — that is to say, a tenth of each fifty; but the cannon once safely past, the fate of the campaign was secure.

Later it was discovered that the pass of the Little Saint-Bernard would have been practicable, and that the whole artillery could have crossed it without dismounting a gun or losing a man. It is true, however, that the feat would have been less splendid, because less difficult. The army was now on the fertile plains of Piedmont. It was reinforced on the Ticino by a corps of twelve thousand men, detached from the Army of the Rhine by Moreau, who, after the two victories he had just won, could afford to lend the Army of Italy this contingent. He had sent them by the Saint-Gothard, and thus strengthened, the First Consul entered Milan without striking a blow.

By the bye, how came the First Consul, who, according to an article of the Constitution of the year VIII. could not leave France or place himself at the head of the armies, to be where he was? We shall now tell you.

The evening before the day on which he left Paris, — that is to say, the 5th of May, or, according to the calendar of the times, the 15th Floréal, — he had sent for the two other consuls and all the ministers, saying to Lucien: —

"Prepare a circular letter to the prefects for to-morrow." Then he said to Fouché: "You will publish the circular in all the newspapers. You are to say that I have left for

Dijon, to inspect the Army of the Reserves. Add, but without affirming it positively, that I may go as far as Geneva. In any case, let it be impressed on every one that I shall not be absent more than two weeks. If anything unusual happens I shall return like a thunderclap. I commend to your keeping all the great interests of France; and I hope you will soon hear of me *via* Vienna and London."

On the 6th he started. From that moment his strong determination was to make his way to the plains of Piedmont, and there fight a decisive battle. Then, as he never doubted that he should conquer, he answered, like Scipio when accused of violating the constitution: "On such a day, at such an hour I fought the Carthaginians; let us go to the Capitol, and render thanks to the gods."

Leaving Paris on the 6th of May, the commander-in-chief was encamped with his whole army between Turin and Casale on the 26th of the same month. It had rained the whole day. Toward evening the storm passed off, and the sky, as often happens in Italy, changed in a few moments from murky darkness to the loveliest azure, and the stars came sparkling out. The First Consul signed to Roland to follow him, and together they issued from the little town of Chivasso, and walked along the banks of the river. About a hundred yards beyond the last houses a tree, blown down by the wind, offered a seat to pedestrians. Bonaparte sat down, and made a sign to Roland to sit beside him. He seemed to have something to say, some confidence to make to his aide-de-camp.

Both were silent for a time, and then Bonaparte said:

"Roland, do you remember a conversation we had together at the Luxembourg?"

"General," said Roland, laughing, "we had many conversations at the Luxembourg. In one of which you told me we were to cross to Italy in the spring, and fight General Melas at Torre di Galifolo or San-Giuliano. Does that programme still hold good?"

"Yes; but that 's not what I mean. I mean the day we talked of marriage."

"Oh, yes! my sister's marriage. That has probably taken place by this time, general."

"No, Roland, not your sister's marriage, but your own. Do you know whom I always meant you should marry?"

"No, general."

"Well, my sister Caroline."

"Your sister?"

"Yes; does that surprise you?"

"I had no idea you ever thought of doing me that honor."

"You are either ungrateful, Roland, or you are saying what you do not think. You know that I love you."

"Oh! my general!" cried Roland.

He took both hands of the First Consul, and pressed them with the deepest gratitude.

"Yes, I should have liked to have you for my brother-in-law."

"Your sister and Murat loved each other," said Roland. "It is much better that the plan should have gone no farther. And now you know it is impossible. Your three sisters are all married, — to General Leclerc, and Prince Bacciochi, and now Murat."

"In short," said Bonaparte, laughing, "you feel easy and tranquil in your mind. You think yourself rid of my alliance."

"Oh, general!" exclaimed Roland.

"You are not ambitious, it appears."

"General, let me love you for the good you have done to me, and not for any you seek to do."

"But suppose it is for my own interests that I want to bind you to me, not by the ties of friendship only, but by those of family? Suppose I say to you: In my plans for the future I cannot rely upon my two brothers, whereas I could never for one instant doubt you?"

"In heart, yes, you are right."

"In all respects, I say. What can I do with Leclerc, — a commonplace man; with Bacciochi, — who is not a Frenchman; with Murat, — lion-hearted and feather-headed? And yet some day I shall have to make princes of them because they are the husbands of my sisters. When that time comes, what can I make you?"

"A marshal of France."

"What next?"

"What next? I should say that was good enough."

"You 'd be one of a dozen and not a unity of your own."

"Let me be simply your friend. Let me talk out the truth with you, and then I 'll warrant I shall be out of the crowd."

"That may be enough for you, Roland, but it is not enough for me," insisted Bonaparte. Then, as Roland said nothing, he continued, "I have no more sisters, it is true, but I have dreamed that you might be to me something closer than a brother."

He paused. Roland still said nothing, and he went on: —

"There is a young girl, Roland, a charming child, whom I love as a daughter. She is just seventeen. You are twenty-six, and a brigadier-general *de facto*. Before the end of this campaign you will be general of division. Well, Roland, when the campaign is over we will return together to Paris, and you shall marry — "

At that instant Bourrienne appeared in haste.

"Is that you, Bourrienne?" asked Bonaparte, impatiently.

"Yes, general, a courier from France."

"Ah!"

"And a letter from Madame Bonaparte."

"Good!" said the First Consul, rising eagerly; "give it to me." And he almost snatched the letter from Bourrienne's hand.

"And for me," asked Roland, — "nothing for me?"

"Nothing."

"Strange!" said the young man, pensively.

The moon had risen. By that exquisite Italian moonlight Bonaparte could see to read his letter. Through the first two pages his face expressed complete serenity. Bonaparte adored his wife. The letters afterwards published by Queen Hortense are proof positive of that love. Roland watched these expressions of the soul on the features of his general. But toward the end of the letter Bonaparte's face clouded, his brow frowned, he cast a furtive look at Roland.

"Ah!" said the young man, "so it seems there is something about me in that letter?"

Bonaparte did not answer, and continued reading. When he had finished he folded the letter, and put it in the side pocket of his coat. Then, turning to Bourrienne, he said: —

"I am coming in. Probably I shall send a courier. Go and wait for me, and mend some pens."

Bourrienne bowed, and returned toward Chivasso.

Bonaparte then went up to Roland, and laying his hand on his shoulder, said: —

"I have ill-luck with all the marriages I attempt."

"How so?" asked Roland.

"Your sister's marriage is off."

"Has she refused?"

"No; she has not."

"She has not! Can it be Sir John?"

"Yes."

"Refused to marry my sister after asking her of me, of my mother, of you, of herself!"

"Come, don't begin by getting angry. Try to see that there must be some mystery in all this."

"I don't see any mystery. I see an insult."

"Ah! there you are, Roland! I see plainly why your mother and sister would not write to you; but Josephine thought the matter so serious that you ought to be

informed of it. She writes me this news, and asks me to tell it to you, if I think best. You see I have not hesitated."

"I thank you sincerely, general. Does Sir John Tanlay give any reason for this refusal?"

"Yes, a reason that is no reason."

"What reason?"

"One that cannot be a true one."

"Tell me!"

"It is only necessary to look at the man and talk with him five minutes to understand him on that score."

"But what reason does he give, general, for breaking his word?"

"That your sister is less rich than he thought she was."

Roland broke into the nervous laugh which was a sign with him of violent agitation.

"Ha!" he said; "but that was the very first thing I told him."

"What did you tell him?"

"That my sister had n't a penny. How can the children of republican generals be rich?"

"What reply did he make?"

"That he was rich enough for two."

"You see, therefore, that that is not the real reason of his refusal."

"And it is your opinion that one of your aides-de-camp can receive such an insult to his sister and not demand satisfaction?"

"In such situations, my dear Roland, the person who feels affronted must judge of the matter for himself."

"General, how many days do you think it will be before we have a decisive action?"

Bonaparte calculated.

"Not less than fifteen days, or three weeks," he answered.

"Then I ask you for a furlough of fifteen days."

"On one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you will first go to Bourg and ask your sister from which side the refusal came."

"That is my intention."

"In that case, you have no time to lose."

"You see I lose none," said the young man, already starting forward on his way to the village.

"One moment," said Bonaparte; "you will take some despatches for Paris, won't you?"

"Ah, I see! I am the courier you spoke of just now to Bourrienne."

"Precisely."

"Come, then."

"Wait one moment. The young men you arrested —"

"The Companions of Jehu?"

"Yes. Well, it seems they are all of noble families. They were fanatics rather than criminals. It appears that your mother has been made the victim of some judicial trick or other, and has testified at their trial, and caused their conviction."

"Possibly. My mother, you know, was in a coach that was stopped by them, and saw the face of their leader."

"Well, your mother implores me, through Josephine, to pardon those poor madmen, — that 's the word she uses. They have appealed their case. You will get there before the appeal can be rejected, and, if you think it desirable, tell the minister of justice from me to suspend matters. After you get back we can see what had best be done."

"Thank you, general, anything more?"

"No," said Bonaparte.

And Roland took the road to Chivasso without further delay.

XXV.

THE TRIAL.

Half an hour later, Roland was galloping along the road to Ivrea in a post-chaise. He was to travel thus to Aosta, at Aosta to take a mule, cross the Saint-Bernard to Martigny, thence to Geneva, on to Bourg, and from Bourg to Paris.

While he is galloping along let us see what has happened in France, and clear up the points in the conversation between Bonaparte and his aide-de-camp which must be obscure to the reader's mind.

The prisoners made by Roland in the grotto of Ceyzeriat remained but one night in the prison at Bourg. They were transferred the next day to that of Besançon, where a council of war was to try the case. It will be remembered that two of these prisoners were so grievously wounded that they were carried on stretchers into Bourg. One died that night; the other, four days after his arrival at Besançon. The number of prisoners was therefore reduced to four: Morgan, who had surrendered himself safe and sound, and Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas, who were more or less wounded in the fight, though none of them dangerously. These four aliases hid, as the reader will remember, the real names of the Comte de Sainte-Hermine, the Comte de Jayat, the Vicomte de Valensolle, and the Marquis de Ribier.

While the evidence against the four prisoners was being taken before the military commission at Besançon, the time expired when under the law such cases were tried by courts-martial. The four prisoners became accountable therefore to the civil tribunals. This made a great difference to them, not only as to the penalty of their crime, if

convicted, but in the mode of its execution. Condemned by a court martial they would be shot; condemned by the civil courts they would be guillotined. Death by the first was not infamous; death by the second was.

As soon as it appeared that their case was to be brought before a jury it belonged by law to the jury of Bourg. Toward the end of March the four prisoners were therefore transferred from the prison of Besançon to that of Bourg, and the first steps toward a trial were taken.

But here the prisoners adopted a line of defence which greatly embarrassed the prosecuting officers. They declared themselves to be the Comte Sainte-Hermine, the Comte de Jayat, the Vicomte de Valensolle, the Marquis de Ribier, and to have no connection with the pillagers of the mail-coaches, whose names were Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas. They acknowledged having taken part in armed assemblages; but these companies belonged to the forces of M. de Teyssonnet, and were a ramification of the army of Brittany intended to operate in the South and East, while the army of Brittany which had just signed a peace operated in the North. They had waited only to hear of Cadoudal's surrender to do likewise, and the despatch of the Breton commander was no doubt on its way to them when they were attacked and captured.

All this was difficult to disprove. The pillage of the coaches was invariably done by masked men, and apart from Madame de Montrevel and Sir John Tanlay, no one had ever seen the faces of the assailants. It will be remembered under what circumstances they had been seen, — by Sir John on the night they had tried, condemned, and stabbed him; by Madame de Montrevel when the diligence was stopped, and she, in her nervous struggle, had struck off the mask of the leader.

Both had been summoned before the preliminary court, and both had been confronted with the prisoners; but neither Sir John nor Madame de Montrevel had recognized any of them. How came they to practise this deception?

As for Madame de Montrevel, it was comprehensible. She felt a double gratitude to the man who had come to her assistance, and who had also forgiven and even praised Édouard's attack upon him. But Sir John's silence was more difficult to explain, for among the four prisoners he must have recognized at least two of his own assailants. They had recognized him, and a certain quiver ran through their veins as they did so, but none the less were their eyes resolutely fixed upon him, when, to their great astonishment, Sir John, in spite of the judge's insistence, calmly replied: —

"I have not the honor of knowing any of these gentlemen."

Amélie, — we have said nothing of her, for there are feelings which no pen can even attempt to depict, — Amélie, pale, feverish, almost expiring since the fatal night when Morgan was arrested, — Amélie awaited the return of her mother and Sir John from the preliminary inquiry with dreadful anxiety. Sir John came first. Madame de Montrevel had stayed at the gate to give certain orders to Michel. As soon as Amélie saw him she rushed toward him, crying out: —

"What happened?"

Sir John looked behind him to be sure that Madame de Montrevel should not hear him, then he said: —

"Your mother and I recognized no one."

"Ah, how noble you are! how generous! how good!" cried the young girl, trying to kiss his hand.

But he, withdrawing his hand, said hastily, "I have only done as I promised you; but hush! — here is your mother."

Amélie stepped back.

"Ah, mamma!" she said, "so you did not say anything to compromise those unfortunate men?"

"Would you have me send to the scaffold a man who had helped me, and who, instead of punishing Édouard, kissed him?"

"And yet," said Amélie, trembling, "you recognized him, did you not?"

"Perfectly," replied Madame de Montrevel; "he is a fair man, with black brows and eyes. He calls himself Charles de Sainte-Hermine."

Amélie gave a smothered cry. Then, making an effort to control herself, she asked: —

"Is that the end of it for you and Sir John? Will you be called to testify again?"

"Probably not," replied Madame de Montrevel.

"In any case," said Sir John, "as neither Madame de Montrevel nor I recognized them, your mother will persist in that evidence."

"Most certainly," said Madame de Montrevel. "God keep me from causing the death of that unhappy young man. I should never forgive myself. It is bad enough that he and his companions were captured by Roland."

Amélie sighed, but a sort of calmness came upon her face. She cast a look of gratitude at Sir John, and went up to her room, where Charlotte was waiting for her. Charlotte had become much more than a maid to Amélie. She was almost a friend. Every day since the four young men were brought back to the prison at Bourg, Charlotte had gone there to see her father. During her visits nothing was talked of but the prisoners, whom the worthy jailer, royalist as he was, pitied with all his heart. Charlotte made him tell her everything, even to their slightest words, and she reported what she heard to Amélie.

Matters stood thus when Madame de Montrevel and Sir John Tanlay had arrived from Paris. Before leaving Paris Madame de Montrevel had received from Roland, and also from Josephine, the First Consul's assurance that he approved of the marriage of her daughter with Sir John Tanlay, and wished it to take place during his absence, as soon as possible. Sir John had declared to her that his most ardent desires were for this union, and that he only awaited Amélie's commands to be the happiest of

men. Matters having reached this point Madame de Montrevel, on the morning of the day when she and Sir John were to give their testimony, arranged a tête-à-tête interview between Sir John and her daughter.

This interview lasted more than an hour, and Sir John did not leave Amélie until the carriage came to the door to take Madame de Montrevel and himself to the court-room. We have seen that, so far, this first inquiry was in favor of the prisoners, and we have also seen how Sir John was received, on his return, by Amélie. That evening, Madame de Montrevel had a private conversation with her daughter. To her mother's pressing inquiries Amélie merely replied that the state of her health was such that she desired a postponement of her marriage, and that she counted on Sir John's delicacy to grant it.

The next day Madame de Montrevel was obliged to return to Paris, her position in Madame Bonaparte's household not admitting of longer absence. Up to the moment of her departure she strongly urged Amélie to accompany her; but again the girl dwelt on the feebleness of her health. The sweetest and most reviving months of the year, those of April and May, were just opening. She entreated to be allowed to spend them in the country, for they were sure, she said, to do her good. Madame de Montrevel, always unable to deny anything to Amélie, above all when it concerned her health, granted the request.

On her return to Paris Madame de Montrevel travelled, as before, from Paris to Bourg with Sir John. Much to her amazement, he did not say one word to her during the two days' journey of his marriage to Amélie. But Madame Bonaparte, as soon as she saw her friend, cried out: —

"Well! when is the marriage to be? You know how the First Consul wishes it."

To which Madame de Montrevel replied: "It all depends on Sir John Tanlay."

This answer made Madame Bonaparte thoughtful. Why

should a man who had been so eager suddenly grow cold? Time alone could explain the mystery.

Time went by, and the trial of the prisoners came on. They were confronted with all the travellers who had signed the various depositions relating to the stoppages of the mail-coaches, but no one had recognized them. No one had seen their faces uncovered. Moreover, the travellers asserted that none of their own property, either money or jewels, had been taken. Jean Picot testified that two hundred louis, taken accidentally from him, had been returned.

These preliminary inquiries took up two months; at the end of which time the prisoners, against whom there was no evidence connecting them with the pillage of the coaches, were virtually under no accusation but that of their own admissions; that is to say, of being affiliated with the Breton and Vendéan insurrection. They were simply one of the armed bands roaming the Jura under the orders of M. de Teyssonnet.

The judges delayed the final trial as long as possible, hoping that some witness giving more definite information would be discovered. This hope was balked. No one had really suffered from the deeds imputed to these young men, except the Treasury, whose misfortunes concerned nobody. The trial, however, could not be delayed much longer.

The prisoners, on their side, had made the best of their time. By means, as we have seen, of a clever exchange of passports, Morgan travelled sometimes as Ribier, and Ribier as Sainte-Hermine, and so with the others. The result was a confusion in the testimony of the innkeepers, which the entries in their books increased. The arrival of travellers noted on the registers an hour too early or an hour too late, made irrefutable alibis for the prisoners. The judges were morally convinced of their guilt; but their conviction was impossible against such testimony.

On the other hand, it must be said that public sympathy was wholly with the prisoners.

The trial began. The prison at Bourg adjoins the court-room. The prisoners could be brought there by interior passages. Large as the great hall was, it was crowded on the opening day of the trial. The whole population of Bourg crowded about the doors, and persons came from Mâcon, Lons-le-Saulnier, Besançon, and Nantua, so great was the excitement caused by the stoppage of the coaches, and so popular the exploits of The Company of Jehu.

The entry of the four prisoners was greeted by a murmur, in which there was nothing offensive. Curiosity and sympathy seemed to have equal shares in it. Their presence, it must be said, was well calculated to awaken both sentiments. Very handsome, dressed in the last fashion of the day, self-possessed without insolence, smiling toward the audience, courteous toward their judges, though at times a little sarcastic, their best defence was their personal appearance.

The oldest of the four was barely thirty. Questioned as to their names and Christian names, their age and places of birth, they answered as follows: —

"Charles de Sainte-Hermine, born at Tours, department of the Indre-et-Loire, aged twenty-four years."

"Louis-André de Jayat, born at Bagé-le-Château, department of the Ain, aged twenty-nine years."

"Raoul-Frédéric-Auguste de Valensolle, born at Sainte-Colombe, department of the Rhone, aged twenty-seven years."

"Pierre-Hector de Ribier, born at Bollène, department of Vaucluse, aged twenty-six years."

Questioned as to their social state and condition, all four said they were of noble rank and royalists.

These fine young men, defending themselves against death upon the scaffold, not against a soldier's death before the guns, — who asked for death, as it were, by declaring themselves insurrectionists, but demanded that it be a death of honor, — formed a splendid spectacle of youth, courage, and gallant bearing.

The judges saw plainly that, under the mere accusation of being taken with arms in their hands as insurrectionists, La Vendée having submitted and Brittany being pacificated, they would have to be acquitted. This was not a result that would satisfy the minister of police. Death awarded by a council of war would not have satisfied him. He wanted these men to die a dishonoring death, the death of criminals, a death of infamy.

The trial had lasted three days without proceeding in the direction of Fouché's wishes. Charlotte, who could get into the court-room easily through the prison, was there each day, and brought back to Amélie every evening some fresh word of hope. On the fourth day Amélie could bear the suspense no longer. She dressed herself in a Bressan costume like the one worn by Charlotte, except that the black lace of the head-dress was longer and thicker than that which the peasant woman wore. It formed a veil, and hid her features. Charlotte presented Amélie to her father, as a friend of hers who was curious to hear the trial. The good man did not seem to recognize Mademoiselle de Montrevel, and in order to enable the two girls to see the prisoners well he placed them in the doorway of the porter's room, which opened upon a passage that led to the court-room. This passage was so narrow at that particular point that the four gendarmes, who accompanied the prisoners, changed the line of march. First came two gendarmes, then the prisoners one by one, then the other two gendarmes. The girls stood in the doorway of the porter's room.

When Amélie heard the opening of the doors she leaned on Charlotte for support. The earth appeared to give way under her feet, and the wall at her back. She heard the sound of steps and the rattle of the gendarmes' sabres. Then the door from the prison opened. First one gendarme appeared, then another, then Sainte-Hermine, walking first as though he were still Morgan, the captain of The Company of Jehu.

As he passed, Amélie murmured, "Charles!"

The prisoner recognized the beloved voice, gave a faint cry, and felt that a paper was being slipped into his hand. He pressed that precious hand, murmured her name, and passed on. The others who followed did not, or pretended not to, notice the two girls. As for the gendarmes they had seen and heard nothing.

As soon as the party stepped into the light Morgan unfolded the note, which was as follows: —

"Do not be anxious, my Charles; I am and ever will be your faithful Amélie, in life or in death. I have told all to Sir John Tanlay. He is the most generous man on earth; he has promised me to break off the marriage and take the whole responsibility on himself. I love you!"

Morgan kissed the paper, and put it in his breast. Then he gave a look down the corridor, and saw the two Bressan peasant women leaning in a doorway. Amélie had risked all to see him once more. It is true, however, that at this last session of the court no additional witnesses were expected to injure the prisoners, and in the absence of proof it was impossible to convict them.

The best lawyers in the department, those of Lyon and those of Besançon, had been retained by the prisoners for their defence. Each had spoken in turn, destroying, bit by bit, the indictment, as in a tournament of the middle-ages, a strong and dexterous knight knocks off, piece by piece, his adversary's armor. Flattering applause had followed the more remarkable points of their arguments, in spite of the usher's warnings and the admonitions of the judge.

Amélie, with clasped hands, was thanking God, who so visibly manifested himself in favor of the prisoners. A dreadful weight was lifted from her tortured breast. She breathed with joy, and she looked, through tears of gratitude, at the Christ which was placed above the judge's head.

The arguments were all made, and the case about to close. Suddenly an usher entered the court-room, approached the judge, and whispered to him.

"Gentlemen," said the judge, "the court is adjourned for a time. Let the prisoners be taken out."

There was a moment of feverish uneasiness among the audience. What could have happened? What unexpected thing was about to take place? Every one looked anxiously at his neighbor. Amélie's heart was wrung by a presentiment. She put her hand to her breast. It was as though an ice-cold iron had pierced it to the springs of life.

The gendarmes rose; the prisoners did likewise, and were then marched back to prison. One after the other they passed Amélie. The hands of the lovers touched each other. Those of Amélie were cold as death.

"Whatever happens, thank you," said Charles, as he passed.

Amélie tried to answer, but the words died on her lips.

During this time the judge had risen, and passed into the council-chamber. There he found a veiled woman, who had just left a carriage at the door of the court-house, and had not spoken to any one on her way.

"Madame," said the judge, "I offer you many excuses for the very abrupt manner in which I have brought you from Paris; but the life of a man depends upon it, and before that consideration all others fail."

"You have no need to excuse yourself, monsieur," said the lady, still veiled. "I know the prerogatives of the law, and I am here at your orders."

"Madame," resumed the judge, "I appreciate the feelings of delicacy which led you, when first confronted with the prisoners, not to recognize the one who had supported you when fainting. At that time the prisoners denied their identity with the pillagers of the coaches. Since then they have confessed all; but it is our wish to know

the one who showed you that consideration, in order that we may recommend him to the First Consul's mercy."

"What!" exclaimed the lady, "have they really confessed?"

"Yes, madame; but they will not say which of their number helped you, — fearing, no doubt, to contradict your testimony, and thus cause you embarrassment."

"What is it you require of me, monsieur?"

"That you will save that gentleman."

"Oh! willingly," said the lady, rising. "What am I to do?"

"Answer a question which I shall address to you."

"I am ready, monsieur."

"Wait here a moment. You shall be sent for immediately."

The judge went back into the court-room. A gendarme standing at each door prevented any one from approaching the lady. The judge resumed his seat.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the session is reopened."

General excitement prevailed. The ushers called silence, and silence was restored.

"Introduce the witness," said the judge.

An usher opened the door into the council-room, and the lady, still veiled, was brought into court. All eyes turned to her. Who was she? Why was she there? What had she come for? Amélie's eyes were fixed upon her.

"Oh, my God!" murmured the girl, "grant that I be mistaken."

"Madame," said the judge, "the prisoners are about to be brought in. Have the goodness to point out the one who, when the Geneva diligence was stopped, paid you those attentions."

A shudder ran through the audience. They felt that some fatal trap had been laid for the prisoners.

Voices began to cry, "Say nothing!" but the ushers, at a sign from the judge, called out imperatively, "Silence!" Amélie's heart turned deadly cold. A cold sweat burst

from her forehead. Her knees gave way and trembled under her.

"Bring in the prisoners," said the judge, imposing silence by a look, as the usher did with his voice; "and you, madame, have the goodness to raise your veil."

The lady obeyed.

"My mother!" cried Amélie; but in a voice so choked that no one heard her.

"Madame de Montrevel!" muttered the audience.

At that moment the first gendarme appeared at the door, then the second. After him the prisoners, but not in the same order as before. Morgan had placed himself third, so that, separated as he was from the gendarmes by Montbar and Adler in front, and d'Assas behind, he might be better able to clasp Amélie's hand.

Montbar entered first.

Madame de Montrevel shook her head.

Then came Adler.

Madame de Montrevel made the same negative sign.

Just then Morgan passed beside Amélie.

"We are lost!" she said to him.

He looked at her in astonishment, and pressed her hand. Then he entered.

"That is he," said Madame de Montrevel, as soon as she saw Morgan, — or, if the reader prefers it, Comte Charles de Sainte-Hermine, who was now proved one and the same man by Madame de Montrevel's identification.

A cry of distress came from the audience. Montbar burst into a laugh.

"Ha! by my faith!" he cried, "that will teach you, dear friend, to play the gallant with fainting women." Then, turning to Madame de Montrevel, he added, "With three short words, madame, you have decapitated four heads."

A terrible silence fell, in the midst of which a groan was heard. It came from a woman in peasant's dress, who was being carried into the jailer's room. The pris-

oners made no attempt at denial; but, just as Morgan had joined with them when arrested, so they now joined with him. Their heads should be saved or fall together.

The same day, at ten at night, the jury rendered a verdict of guilty, and the court pronounced the sentence of death. Three days later, by force of entreaty, the lawyers for the defence obtained permission for the prisoners to appeal their case.

XXVI.

IN WHICH AMÉLIE KEEPS HER WORD.

The verdict rendered by the jury of the town of Bourg had a terrible effect, not only in the court-room, but throughout the town. The four prisoners had shown such chivalric brotherhood, such noble bearing, such deep conviction in the faith they professed, that their enemies themselves admired the strange devotion which had made robbers and highwaymen of men of rank and family.

Madame de Montrevel, horrified at the part she had been, involuntarily, made to play at the vital moment of this drama, saw but one means of repairing the evil she had done, and that was to start instantly for Paris and fling herself at the feet of the First Consul, imploring him to pardon the four condemned men. She did not even take time to go to the Noires-Fontaines to see her daughter. She knew that Bonaparte's departure was fixed for the first week in May, and it was now the 6th. When she left Paris everything had been prepared for that departure.

She wrote a brief line to Amélie, explaining by what fatal inducements she had been led, while intending to save the life of one, to destroy the lives of the four men. Then, as if she were ashamed of having broken the pledge she had made to Amélie, and above all to herself, she sent for fresh post-horses, and returned to Paris.

She arrived there on the morning of May 8th. Bonaparte had started on the evening of the 6th. He said on leaving that he was only going to Dijon, possibly to Geneva, but in any case, he should not be absent more than three weeks. The prisoners' appeal, even if rejected,

would not be acted on for five or six weeks. It seemed, therefore, that hope was not lost.

But alas! it was lost when it became evident that the review at Dijon was only a pretext, that the journey to Geneva had never been a serious one, and that Bonaparte, instead of going to Switzerland, was really on his way to Italy. Then Madame de Montrevel, unwilling to appeal to her son, for she had heard his oath at the time Sir John was left for dead, and knew of the part he had taken in the capture of The Company of Jehu, — then, we say, Madame de Montrevel entreated Josephine, and Josephine promised to write to Bonaparte. She kept her promise that evening.

But the trial had made a great noise. It was not as if the prisoners were ordinary men. Justice made haste; and on the thirty-fifth day after the verdict was given the appeal was rejected. This decision was immediately sent to Bourg, with an order to execute the prisoners within twenty-four hours.

Notwithstanding the haste of the minister of police in forwarding the order, the news was not received in the first instance by the judicial authorities at Bourg. While the prisoners were taking their daily walk in the courtyard a stone was flung over the outer wall, and fell at their feet. A letter was attached to the stone. Morgan, who still retained, in his relation to his companions, the position of leader, picked up the stone, opened the letter, and read it. Then, turning to his friends, he said: —

"The appeal is rejected, as we might have supposed, and in all probability the ceremony will take place to-morrow."

Valensolle and Ribier, who were playing a species of quoits, with crown-pieces and louis, left their game to hear the news. Having heard it they returned to their play without remark. Jayat, who was reading "La Nouvelle Héloïse," resumed his book, observing: "Then I shall not have time to finish M. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's

masterpiece; and upon my word I don't regret it, for it is the most utterly false and wearisome book I ever read in my life."

Sainte-Hermine passed his hand over his forehead, murmuring, "Poor Amélie!" Then observing Charlotte, who was at the window of the jailer's room, which looked into the prisoner's courtyard, he went to her.

"Tell Amélie," he said, "that she must keep the promise she made to me, to-night."

The jailer's daughter closed the window, kissed her father, and told him that in all probability he would see her there again that evening. Then she returned to Les Noires-Fontaines, a road she had taken twice every day, once going in the middle of the day, once returning at night, for the last two months. Every night on returning she found Amélie in the same place, sitting at that window which in happier days had given entrance to her beloved Charles. Since the day when she fainted in the court-room, after the verdict of the jury, she had shed no tear, and, we might almost add, had said no word. Unlike the marble of antiquity waking to life, she might have been compared to a living woman stiffening into stone. Every day she grew paler, more icy.

Charlotte watched her with astonishment. Common minds, always impressed by noisy demonstrations, that is to say, by cries and tears, are unable to understand a mute sorrow. Dumbness to them is indifference. The peasant girl was therefore astonished at the calmness with which Amélie received the message she was charged to deliver. She did not see, in the dimness of the twilight, that Amélie's face from being pale grew livid. She did not feel the deadly clutch, which, like an iron wrench, had seized her heart. She did not know that as her mistress walked to the door an automatic stiffness was in her limbs. Nevertheless she followed her anxiously. But, at the door, Amélie stretched out her hand.

"Wait for me there," she said.

Charlotte obeyed. Amélie closed the door behind her, and went up to Roland's room.

Roland's chamber was veritably that of a soldier and a huntsman, and its chief adornments were trophies and weapons. Arms of all kinds, French and foreign, were here, from the blue-barrelled pistol of Versailles to the silver-handled pistol of Cairo, from the tempered blade of Catalonia to the Turkish scimitar.

Amélie took down from this arsenal four daggers, sharp-edged and pointed, and eight pistols of different shapes. She put balls in a bag and powder in a horn. Thus supplied, she returned to her own room. There Charlotte assisted her in again putting on the peasant costume. Then she waited for night. Total darkness comes late in June. Amélie stood erect, motionless, mute, leaning against the chimney-piece, and looking through the open window at the village of Ceyzeriat, which was slowly disappearing in the gathering night. When she could no longer distinguish anything but the lights which shone from place to place, she said: —

"Come, it is time to go."

The two young women left the house. Michel paid no attention to Amélie, supposing her to be some friend of Charlotte, who had called to see her, and whom the jailer's daughter was now escorting home.

Ten o'clock was striking as they passed the church of Brou. It was a quarter past ten when Charlotte knocked at the prison door. Old Courtois opened it. We have already shown the political opinions of the worthy jailer. He was a royalist. He felt the deepest sympathy for the four prisoners, and had hoped, like nearly every one in Bourg, like Madame de Montrevel, whose despair at what she had done was known to him, that the First Consul would pardon them. He had, consequently, softened their captivity as much as possible, without failing in his duty, by relieving them of all needless restrictions. On the other hand, it is true that, in spite of this sympathy,

he had refused a gift of sixty thousand francs in gold (a sum which in those days was worth treble what it is now) to allow them to escape.

We have seen how, being taken into confidence by his daughter, he had allowed Amélie, disguised as a peasant, to enter the prison; and the reader will also remember the kindness shown by the worthy man to Amélie and her mother when they themselves were prisoners. This time, and as if he were still ignorant of the rejection of the appeal, he allowed his feelings to be again worked upon. Charlotte told him that her young mistress was just starting for Paris to endeavor to hasten the pardon, and that she desired before leaving to see the Comte de Sainte-Hermine, and obtain his last instructions.

There were five doors to break through to reach the street, a guard-house in the courtyard, sentinels within and without the prison. Consequently, old Courtois felt no anxiety lest his prisoners should escape. He consented, not unwillingly, that Amélie should see Morgan, and taking a light he walked before her. The young girl, as though prepared to start by the mail-coach at once on leaving the prison, carried in her hand a travelling-bag. Charlotte followed her mistress.

"You will recognize the cell, Mademoiselle de Montrevel," said Courtois; "it is the same you were confined in with your mother. The leader of these unfortunate young men, the Comte Charles de Sainte-Hermine, asked me as a favor to put them in cage No. 1. You know that 's the name we give our cells. I did not think I was bound to refuse him that satisfaction, knowing how the poor young man loved you. Oh, don't be uneasy, Mademoiselle Amélie, I will never tell your secret. Then the count asked me questions. He wanted to know which was your mother's bed and which was yours. I told him, and then he wanted his to stand exactly where yours stood. That was n't hard to manage, for the bed was not only in the same place, but it was the very one you had. Since the

day he entered your cell the poor lad has almost always been lying on that bed."

Amélie gave a sigh that was almost a groan. She felt — and it was long since she had done so — a tear moistening her eyelashes. Yes, she was loved as she loved, and the lips of a stranger gave her the proof of it. At this moment of supreme farewell, the conviction shone like a diamond of light on the blackness of her sorrow.

The doors opened one by one before old Courtois. When the last was reached Amélie laid her hand on the jailer's shoulder. She thought she heard a chant. Listening attentively, it proved to be a voice repeating verses.

But the voice was not that of Morgan. This voice was unknown to her. The tones of it were sad as an elegy, religious as a psalm. Here is what it said: —

I have opened my heart to the God of the just,
He has seen my penitent tears;
He has calmed my remorse, he has armed me with trust,
He has pitied and stilled my fears.

My enemies, scoffing, have said in their rage,
"Let him die, and his name be cursed."
Saith the Father in mercy, my grief to assuage,
"Their hatred hath done its worst:

"I have heard thy complaints, and I know the pang
Of remorse that hath laid thee low;
I can pity the soul of the struggling man
That is weak in a world of woe:

"I will crown thy name with the just acclaim
Of the slow-judging, righteous years;
Their pity and justice shall yet proclaim
Thine honor; lay off thy fears."

I bless thee, O God! who hast deigned to restore
Mine honor, and set me free
From shame and remorse; as I enter Death's door
My soul I commend to Thee.

To the banquet of life, an unfortunate guest,
I came for a day, and I die, —
I die in my vigor; I asked not for rest
In the grave where the weary lie.

Farewell to thee, earth! and to thee, tender verdure
Of woodland! and thee, sunny shore!
Green fields that I love, azure skies, smiling nature,
Farewell! — I shall see thee no more.

May thy beauty still gladden the friends that I love,
Friends I long for but fate denies;
May they die full of years, though I wait them above;
May a loving hand close their eyes.

The voice was silent. The last verse, no doubt, was said. Amélie, who would not interrupt the meditations of the doomed men, and who recognized Gilbert's ode written on a hospital bed the night before his death, now signed to the jailer to unlock the door. Old Courtois himself, jailer as he was, seemed to share the girl's emotion, for he put the key into the lock, and turned it as softly as he could. The door opened.

Amélie saw at a glance the whole interior of the cell, and the persons in it.

Valensolle was standing, leaning against the wall, and still holding in his hand the volume from which he had read the lines to which Amélie had just listened. Jayat was seated near a table with his head resting on his hand. Ribier was sitting on the table itself. Near him, farther back, Sainte-Hermine, with his eyes closed as if in sleep, was lying on the bed.

When the young girl, whom they knew to be Amélie, entered, Jayat and Ribier rose. Morgan did not move; he had heard nothing.

Amélie went to him, and, as if the love that she felt was sanctified by the nearness of death, she gave no heed to the presence of his friends, but laid her lips to his lips, murmuring: —

"Wake, Charles! it is I, Amélie. I have come to keep my word."

Morgan gave a joyful cry and clasped her in his arms.

"Monsieur Courtois," said Montbar, "you are a worthy man. Let those poor young people be alone together. It would be sacrilege to trouble by our presence their few last moments together upon earth."

Without a word old Courtois opened the door of the adjoining cell. Valensolle, Jayat, and Ribier entered it, and the door was locked upon them. Then making a sign to Charlotte to follow him, Courtois himself went away. The lovers were left alone.

There are scenes that should not be described, words that must not be repeated. God, who sees and hears them from his eternal throne, alone knows what sombre joys, what bitter pleasures they contain.

At the end of an hour the two young people heard the key once more in the lock. They were sad but calm. The conviction that their separation was not for long gave them a soft serenity. The kind jailer seemed more grieved and distressed at his second appearance than at his first; but Morgan and Amélie thanked him smiling.

He went to the door of the cell where the others were locked up, and opened it, saying to himself, "Faith, it would have been hard if they could n't have been alone together on their last night."

Valensolle, Jayat, and Ribier returned. Amélie, with her left arm wound about Morgan, held out her hand to them. All three, one after the other, kissed that cold damp hand. Then Morgan led her to the door.

"Au revoir!" he said.

"Soon," she answered. And then this parting at the gates of death was sealed by a kiss, followed by a groan so dreadful that it was as though their hearts were rent in twain.

The door was closed, the bolts and keys turned in their places.

"Well?" cried Valensolle, Jayat, and Ribier, with one voice.

"Here!" replied Morgan, emptying the travelling-bag upon the table.

The three young men gave a cry of joy as they saw the shining pistols and the pointed blades. It was all that they desired next to liberty, — the joy, the dolorous, precious joy of knowing themselves the masters of their own life, and, if need be, that of others.

During this time the jailer took Amélie to the street gate. When they reached it he hesitated a moment. Then, touching her arm, —

"Mademoiselle de Montrevel," he said, "forgive me for causing you so much pain, but it is useless for you to go to Paris."

"Because the appeal is rejected, and the execution takes place to-morrow, you mean?" said Amélie.

The jailer, in his astonishment, stepped back a pace.

"I knew it, my good friend," said Amélie. Then, turning to Charlotte, she said, "Take me to the nearest church and come for me to-morrow when all is over."

The nearest church was not far off. It was that of Sainte-Claire. For the last three months it had been, under the late decree of the First Consul, reopened for public worship. As it was now nearly midnight the doors were closed; but Charlotte knew the sexton, and she went to wake him. Amélie waited, leaning against the wall, as motionless as the marble figures which adorned its frontal.

At the end of half an hour the sexton came. During that half-hour the girl had seen a dreadful sight. Three men, dressed in black passed her, dragging a cart, which she saw by the light of the moon was painted red. Within this cart were shapeless objects, long planks, singular ladders, painted the same color. They were dragging it toward the bastion Montrevel, the place used for executions.

Amélie divined what it was. She fell on her knees with a cry.

At that cry the men in black turned round. They fancied for a moment that one of the sculptured figures of the porch had descended from its niche, and was kneeling there. The one who seemed to be the leader approached Amélie.

"Don't come near me!" she cried. "Don't come near me!"

The man returned humbly to his place, and continued his way. The cart disappeared round the corner of the rue des Prisons; but the noise of its wheels still sounded on the stones, and echoed in the girl's heart.

When the sexton and Charlotte came they found Amélie still on her knees. The man made some objections against opening the church at that hour of the night; but a piece of gold and Mademoiselle de Montrevel's name relieved his scruples. A second gold piece induced him to light a little chapel. It was the one in which Amélie had made her first communion. There, kneeling before the altar, she prayed them to leave her alone.

Toward three in the morning she saw the colored window, which surmounted the altar of the Virgin, begin to brighten. It looked to the east, so that the first ray of the rising sun came direct to her eyes as a messenger from God. Little by little the town awoke. Soon the vaulted ceilings of the church shook from the tramp of a troop of horsemen. This troop were on their way to the prison.

A little before nine the girl heard a mighty noise. It seemed to her as though the whole town were rushing in one direction. She strove to lose herself in prayer that she might not listen to these sounds which spoke to her soul a mysterious language, of which, her anguish told her, she understood each word.

In truth, a terrible thing was happening at the prison. It was no wonder if the whole town rushed there.

At nine o'clock the jailer, Courtois, entered the prisoners' cell, to tell them, at one and the same time, that their appeal was rejected, and they must now prepare for death. He found the four prisoners armed to the teeth.

The jailer, taken unawares, was pulled into the cell, and the door locked behind him. Then, without any defence on his part, so astonished was he, the young men seized his keys, and passing through the door opposite to the one by which he had entered, they locked it on him. Leaving him in their cell they found themselves in the adjoining one, where he had placed three of them the night before during Amélie's interview with Morgan. One of the keys of the jailer's bunch opened the other door of this cell, and that door led to the inner courtyard of the prison.

This courtyard was closed by three massive doors, all three of which opened on a sort of lobby, which led to the porter's lodge of the law courts. From this lodge fifteen steps led down to a vast courtyard closed by an iron gate and railing. Usually this gate was only locked at night. If it should happen to be open on this occasion it would offer a possibility of escape.

Morgan found the key of the prison court, opened it, and rushed with his companions to the porter's lodge and to the portico, from which the fifteen steps led down to the great courtyard. From there the four young men could see that all hope was lost.

The iron gate was closed, and eighty men or more, dragoons and gendarmes, were drawn up in front of it.

When the four prisoners, free and armed to the teeth, sprang from the porter's lodge to the portico a great cry, a cry of astonishment and terror, burst from the crowd in the street beyond the railing. Their aspect was formidable indeed, for, to preserve the freedom of their movements, perhaps to hide the shedding of blood, which would have shown so quickly on their white linen, they were

naked to the waist. A handkerchief knotted round their middle bristled with weapons.

They needed but one glance to show them that they were indeed masters of their own lives, but not of their liberty. Amid the clamoring of the crowd and the clicking of the sabres as they were drawn from their scabbards, the young men paused an instant and conferred together. Then Montbar, after shaking hands with his companions, detached himself from them, walked down the fifteen steps and advanced toward the gateway.

When he came within twelve feet of the gate he turned, threw a last smile and look at his comrades, bowed to the now silent crowd, and saying to the soldiers, "So be it, gentlemen of the gendarmerie! so be it, dragoons!" he placed the muzzle of a pistol to his mouth and blew his brains out.

Confused and almost frantic cries followed the explosion, but ceased immediately as Valensolle came down the steps, holding in his hand a dagger with a straight and pointed blade. His pistols, which he seemed not inclined to use, were still in his belt.

He advanced to a sort of shed supported by three pillars, stopped at the first pillar, rested the hilt of his dagger upon it, and with a last salutation to his friends, clasped the column with one arm till the blade had disappeared in his breast. For an instant longer he stood erect; but a mortal pallor overspread his face, then his arm loosened and he fell, stone-dead, on the ground.

The crowd was mute, stiffened with horror.

It was Ribier's turn. In his hands he held two pistols. He advanced to the gateway; when there he aimed at the gendarmes. He did not fire, but the gendarmes did. Three or four shots were heard, and Ribier fell, pierced by two balls.

A sort of admiration took possession of the spectators at the sight of these successive catastrophes. They saw that the young men were willing to die, but to die with honor

and as they willed, and also with grace like the gladiators of antiquity. All present kept silence therefore, when Morgan, now alone, descended, smiling, the steps of the portico, and held up his hand in sign that he wished to speak. Besides, what lacked it, — this eager multitude, watching for blood? A greater sight had been given to it than it came to see. Four dead men had been promised; four dead men alike; four heads cut off. But here was variety in deaths, picturesque, unexpected. It was natural therefore, that the crowd should keep silence, as Morgan was seen to advance.

He held neither pistols nor dagger in his hand; they were in his belt. He passed the body of Valensolle and placed himself between those of Jayat and Ribier.

"Gentlemen," he said, "let us negotiate."

The hush was so great that those present seemed not to breathe. Morgan went on: —

"There lies a man who has blown his brains out; there another who stabbed himself; there a third who was shot; you want to see the fourth guillotined, — I understand that."

A dreadful quiver passed through the crowd.

"Well," continued Morgan, "I am willing to give you that satisfaction. I am ready; but I desire to go to the scaffold in my own way; no one shall touch me; if any one comes near me, I will blow his brains out — except monsieur," continued Morgan, pointing to the executioner. "This is his affair and mine alone."

The request was apparently thought reasonable by the crowd, for a cry arose on all sides: "Yes, yes, yes!"

The officer in command of the gendarmerie saw that the quickest way to end the matter was to let Morgan have his will.

"Will you promise," he said, "that if you are not bound, if your feet and hands are free, you will not attempt to escape?"

"I give my word of honor," replied Morgan.

"Then," said the officer, "stand aside and let us take up the bodies of your comrades."

"That is right," said Morgan, and he turned aside to a wall about ten paces distant and leaned against it.

The gate opened. Three men dressed in black entered the courtyard and removed the bodies one after another. Ribier was not quite dead; he opened his eyes and seemed to look for Morgan.

"I am here," said the latter; "rest easy, dear friend, I follow."

Ribier closed his eyes, not having uttered a word.

When the bodies were removed the officer in command addressed Morgan.

"Are you ready, monsieur," he said.

"Yes, monsieur," said Morgan, bowing with perfect courtesy.

"Then come."

"I come."

And Morgan took his place between a platoon of gendarmerie and a detachment of dragoons.

"Will you mount the cart, monsieur, or go on foot?" asked the officer.

"On foot, on foot, monsieur. I am tenacious that all shall see it is my fancy to be guillotined."

The strange procession crossed the place des Lices and passed along the garden walls of the hôtel Montbazon. The cart bearing the three dead bodies came first, then the dragoons, then Morgan, walking alone in a free space of some ten steps before and behind him, lastly, the gendarmes. At the end of the wall the cortège turned to the left.

Suddenly, through an opening which then existed between the garden and the great market, Morgan saw the scaffold raising its two posts to heaven like bloody arms.

"Faugh!" he cried; "I have never seen a guillotine, and I had no idea it was so ugly."

Then without other explanation, he drew a dagger and plunged it to the hilt into his breast.

The captain of gendarmerie saw the movement without being in time to prevent it; he spurred his horse toward Morgan, who, to the amazement of every one, and of himself, continued standing. But Morgan, drawing a pistol from his belt, and cocking it, exclaimed: —

"Stop! it was agreed that no one should touch me; I will die alone or we will die three. Choose."

The captain reined back his horse.

"March on," said Morgan.

They reached the foot of the guillotine; Morgan drew the dagger from the wound, and struck again as deeply as before. A cry of rage rather than of pain escaped him.

"My soul must be riveted to my body," he said.

Then, as the assistants wished to help him mount the scaffold, on which the executioner was awaiting him, he called out: —

"No, I say again, let no one touch me!"

And he mounted the six steps without staggering.

When he reached the platform he drew the dagger from its wound and gave himself a third blow. Then it was that a frightful laugh burst from his lips; flinging the dagger, which he wrenched from the third ineffectual wound, at the feet of the executioner, he cried out: —

"By my faith! I've done enough. It is your turn; do it if you can."

A minute later and the head of the intrepid man fell on the scaffold, and by a phenomenon of that unconquerable vitality which was in him, it rebounded and rolled forward beyond the apparatus of the guillotine.

Go to Bourg, as I did, and they will tell you that as the head rebounded it was heard to utter the name of Amélie.

The dead bodies were guillotined after the living man; so that the spectators instead of losing anything by the events we have just related, enjoyed a double spectacle.

XXVII.

A CONFESSION.

THREE days after the events just recorded a carriage covered with dust and drawn by two horses white with foam stopped, about seven in the evening, before the gates of the château des Noires-Fontaines. To the great astonishment of the person who was in such haste to arrive, the gates were open, a crowd of peasants filled the courtyard, men and women were kneeling on the portico. Presently, the traveller's sense of hearing being increased by his amazement at what he saw, he fancied he heard the ringing of a bell.

He opened the door of the chaise and sprang out, crossed the courtyard rapidly, went up the portico, and found the stairway which led to the first story of the house covered with people. Up the stairs he ran as he had up the portico, and heard what seemed a murmured prayer from his sister's bedroom. He went to the room; the door was open. Madame de Montrevel and little Édouard were kneeling at Amélie's pillow; near by were Charlotte, Michel, and his son Jacques. The curate of Sainte-Claire was administering the last sacraments; the dismal scene was lighted only by the gleam of the wax-tapers.

Roland was recognized when his carriage drew up at the gate; way was made for him; he entered the room with his head uncovered, and knelt beside his mother.

The dying woman lay on her back, her hands clasped, her head raised on pillows, her eyes fixed and turned to heaven in a sort of ecstasy; she seemed unconscious of Roland's arrival. It was as though her soul were floating

between earth and heaven, while the body belonged to this world.

Madame de Montrevel's hand sought that of Roland, and the poor mother, finding it, dropped her head on her son's shoulder, sobbing. Those sobs were not heard by the dying woman any more than Roland's presence was perceived by her; she lay there utterly immovable. Only, when the viaticum had been administered, when eternal blessedness was promised to her by the priest's consoling voice, her marble lips appeared to live again, and she murmured in a feeble but intelligible voice: —

"So be it."

Then the bell rang again; the choir-boy who carried it left the room; next the two acolytes who held the tapers, then the cross-bearer, lastly the priest who bore the Host. All the strangers present followed the procession; the family and the household remained alone. The house, an instant earlier so full of sound and human beings, was silent, almost deserted.

The dying woman had not moved; her lips were closed, her hands still clasped, her eyes still raised to heaven. At the end of a few moments Roland bent to his mother's ear and said: —

"Come out with me, mother, I must speak to you."

Madame de Montrevel rose; she pushed little Édouard toward the bed; the child rose upon the points of his toes and kissed his sister on the forehead. Then the mother followed him, leaned over her dying daughter, and laid a kiss in the same place, sobbing. Roland followed, with dry eyes but a breaking heart; he would have given much for tears in which to drown his pain. He kissed his sister as the little brother and the mother had kissed her. She seemed as insensible to this kiss as to the preceding ones.

Edouard left the room first; Madame de Montrevel and Roland were following him. When they reached the threshold of the door they stopped and quivered; Roland's name had been uttered.

Roland turned. Again Amélie pronounced his name.

"Did you call me, Amélie?" asked Roland.

"Yes," replied the dying voice.

"Alone, or with my mother?"

"Alone."

That voice, devoid of emphasis yet perfectly intelligible, had something glacial in it; it was like an echo from the other world.

"Go, mother," said Roland; "you see that she wishes to speak to me alone."

"Oh, my God!" murmured Madame de Montrevel, "can there still be hope?"

Low as the words were said the dying daughter heard them.

"No, mother," she said, "God has permitted me to see my brother; but to-night I go to Him."

Madame de Montrevel groaned.

"Roland! Roland!" she exclaimed, "she is there already."

Roland made her a sign with his head to leave them, and she went away. Roland closed the door and then with unutterable emotion he returned to his sister's bedside.

Her body was already stiffening in death; the breath from her lips would scarcely have dimmed a mirror; the eyes alone, unnaturally open, were fixed and brilliant, as though the whole remaining life of the body, dead before its time, were concentrated there. Roland had heard of that strange state called ecstasy, which is nothing else than catalepsy. He saw that Amélie was a victim of that preliminary death.

"I am here, sister," he said; "do you want me?"

"I knew you were coming," she replied, still motionless. "I waited for you."

"How did you know I was coming?" asked Roland.

"I saw you coming."

Roland shuddered.

"Did you know why I came?" he asked.

"Yes. I prayed God so earnestly in my heart that he gave me strength to rise and write to you."

"When was that?"

"Last night."

"Where is the letter?"

"Under my pillow; take it and read it."

Roland hesitated an instant; was his sister delirious? "Poor Amélie!" he murmured.

"Do not pity me," she said, "I go to join him."

"Whom?" asked Roland.

"Him whom I loved, and whom you killed."

Roland uttered a cry; it was delirium or else — what did his sister mean?

"Amélie," he said, "I came to question you — "

"About Sir John Tanlay; yes, I know," she said.

"You know! how could you know?"

"Did I not tell you I saw you coming and knew why you came?"

"Then answer me, sister."

"Do not turn me from God and him, Roland. I have written; read my letter."

Roland passed his hand under the pillow, convinced that his sister was delirious. To his great surprise he felt a paper which he drew out. It was a letter in an envelope; on the envelope were written these words: "For Roland, who will arrive to-morrow."

The letter was dated at eleven the night before. Going nearer to a light, Roland read as follows: —

"Brother, we have each a terrible thing to forgive each other."

Roland looked at his sister; she was still motionless; he continued: —

"I loved Charles de Sainte-Hermine; I did more than love him: he was my lover."

"Oh!" muttered the young man between his teeth, "he shall die!"

"He is dead," said Amélie.

Roland gave a cry of astonishment. He had said the words to which Amélie had replied too low even to hear their utterance himself. His eyes went back to the letter.

"There was no legal marriage possible between the sister of Roland de Montrevel and the leader of The Company of Jehu; that was the terrible secret I bore, — and it crushed me.

"One person alone had to know it, and I told him; that person is Sir John Tanlay.

"May God forever bless that man of loyal heart, who promised to break off an impossible marriage, and who kept his word. Let his life be sacred to you, Roland; he has been my only friend in trouble; his tears have mingled with mine.

"I loved Charles de Sainte-Hermine; I was his mistress: that is the terrible thing you must forgive.

But, in exchange, you caused his death; that is the terrible thing I now forgive you.

"Oh, come fast, Roland! for I cannot die until you are here.

"To die is to see him again; to die is to be with him and never leave him; I am glad to die."

All was clearly and precisely written; there was no sign of delirium in the letter. Roland read it twice, and remained for a few moments motionless, silent, palpitating, full of bitterness; then pity got the better of anger. He went to Amélie, stretched his hand over her and said, gently: —

"Sister, I forgive you."

A slight quiver shook the dying body.

"And now," she said, "call my mother, that I may die in her arms."

Roland went to the door and called Madame de Montrevel. Her door was open; she was waiting, and came at once.

"Is there a change?" she said, eagerly.

"No," replied Roland, "only that Amélie desires to die in your arms."

Madame de Montrevel fell on her knees beside her daughter's bed.

Then Amélie, as though some invisible arm had loosened the bonds which held that rigid body to the bed, rose slowly, parted the hands that were clasped upon her breast, and let one fall into those of her mother.

"Mother," she said, "you gave me life; you have taken it from me; I bless you, — it was a mother's act; there was no happiness possible for your daughter in this world."

Then, letting her other hand fall into that of Roland, who was kneeling on the other side of the bed, she said: —

"We have forgiven each other, Roland."

"Yes, dear Amélie," he replied, "and from the depths of our hearts, I hope."

"I have one last word to say to you."

"And that is?"

"Do not forget that Sir John Tanlay has been my kindest friend."

"Fear nothing," said Roland; "Sir John Tanlay's life is sacred to me."

Amélie drew a long breath; presently, in a voice which showed her growing weakness, she said: —

"Farewell, Roland; farewell, mother; kiss Édouard for me." Then, with a cry from her soul in which there was more of joy than of sadness, "I come, Charles," she cried; "I am here!"

She fell back upon the bed, withdrawing as she did so her two hands, which again met and clasped upon her breast.

Roland and his mother rose and leaned over her. She had resumed her first position, except that the eyelids were closed and the feeble breath extinguished. The martyrdom was over, Amélie was dead.

XXVIII.

INVULNERABLE.

Amélie died in the night of Monday and Tuesday, that is to say, of the 2d and 3d of June, 1800. On the evening of Thursday, June 5, a great crowd was present at the Grand Opera in Paris, on the occasion of the second representation of "Ossian, or the Bards."

We all know the extreme admiration professed by the First Consul for the poems of Macpherson; consequently, the National Academy of Music, as much in flattery as from literary choice, had brought out an opera which, in spite of all exertions, did not appear till a month after General Bonaparte had left Paris to join the Army of the Reserves.

In the balcony on the left sat a lover of music who was noticeable for the deep attention he paid to the performance. During the interval between the first and second acts the door-opener came to him and said in a low voice: "Pardon me, monsieur, are you Sir John Tanlay?"

"I am," said the amateur.

"In that case, a gentleman has a message to give you; he says it is important and asks if you will speak with him in the corridor."

"Oh!" exclaimed Sir John, "is he an officer?"

"He is in citizen's dress, but he looks like a soldier."

"Very good," said Sir John, "I know what it is."

He rose and followed the woman; in the corridor stood Roland. Sir John showed no surprise at seeing him; but the stern look on the young man's face repressed the first impulse of his deep affection, which was to fling himself on his friend's breast.

"I am here, monsieur," said Sir John.

Roland bowed.

"I have just come from your hôtel," he said. "You have, it seems, taken the precaution to inform the porter, every time you left the house, where you were going, so that persons who have business with you might know where to find you."

"That is true, monsieur."

"The precaution was a good one, especially for those who, like me, come from a distance, and are hurried and have no time to lose."

"Then," said Sir John, "was it to see me that you left the army and came to Paris?"

"Solely for that honor, monsieur; and I trust that you will guess my motives and spare me the necessity of explaining them."

"Monsieur," replied Sir John, "from this moment I am at your service."

"At what hour to-morrow can two of my friends wait upon you?"

"At any hour between seven in the morning and midnight, monsieur; unless you prefer that it should be immediately."

"No. I have this instant arrived, and I must have time to find two friends and give them my instructions. If it will not inconvenience you, they will probably present themselves to-morrow between eleven and twelve o'clock. I shall be very much obliged if the affair we have to settle could be arranged for the same day."

"I think that is a possible thing, monsieur; as I understand it to be your wish, the delay shall not be on my side."

"That is all I wanted to know; pray do not let me detain you longer."

Roland bowed and Sir John returned his bow; then as the young man left the theatre, the Englishman returned to the balcony and took his seat. The words exchanged had been uttered on both sides in voices so controlled and with faces so impassible that the nearest person would never have supposed that a quarrel had arisen between the two men who bowed to each other so courteously.

It happened to be the reception day of the minister of war. Roland returned to his hôtel, removed the traces of his journey, jumped into a carriage, and a little before ten o'clock was announced in the salon of citizen Carnot. Two purposes took him there: first, he had a verbal communication to make to the minister of war from the First Consul; secondly, he hoped to find in the minister's salon the two friends he was in need of to arrange his meeting with Sir John.

Everything happened as he hoped. The minister heard from him all the particulars of the crossing of the Mont Saint-Bernard and the situation of the army; and he himself found the two friends of whom he was in search. A few words sufficed to let them know what he wished; soldiers are particularly open to such confidences.

Roland spoke of a serious insult, the nature of which must remain a secret even from his seconds. He declared that he was the offended party, and he claimed the choice of arms and method of fighting, — advantages which belong to the challenger. His friends agreed to present themselves to Sir John, hôtel Mirabeau, rue de Richelieu, at nine in the morning and make all arrangements with Sir John's seconds; after that, they would join Roland at the hôtel de Paris in the same street.

Roland returned to his room at eleven that night, wrote for nearly an hour, and then went to bed and to sleep.

At half-past nine the next morning his friends came to him. They had just left Sir John. Sir John admitted all Roland's rights; declared that he would not discuss any of the arrangements for the meeting; if Roland regarded himself as the injured party, it was for him to dictate conditions. To their remark that they expected to discuss such matters with two of his friends and not with himself, Sir John replied that he knew no one in Paris intimately enough to ask their assistance in such a matter; and that he hoped, once on the ground, one of Roland's two seconds would consent to act on his side. On all points the

two officers declared they had found Sir John a perfect gentleman.

Roland replied that his adversary's request for the services of one of his own seconds was not only fair but suitable, and he authorized either of them to act for Sir John and take charge of his interests. All that remained to do was for Roland to dictate his conditions: they were as follows: —

Pistols were chosen. When loaded, the adversaries were to stand at five paces. At the third clap of the seconds' hands they were to fire. It was, as we see from such conditions, a duel to the death, in which, if either survived, it would be by the mercy of his opponent. Consequently the young officers made many objections; but Roland insisted, declaring that he alone was the judge of the insult offered to him; and he considered it such that no other reparation than this would satisfy him. It was found necessary to yield to such obstinacy. But the friend who was to act for Sir John declared that he would not bind himself to anything on behalf of his client, and that unless the latter distinctly ordered it he would not take part in such a murder.

"Don't excite yourself, my dear fellow," said Roland; "I know Sir John, and I think he will be more accommodating than you."

The seconds returned to Sir John; they found him at his English breakfast, — beefsteak, potatoes, and tea. On seeing them he rose, offered them a share in his repast, and on their declining it, put himself at their disposal. They began by assuring him that he could count on one of them to act as his second. The one acting for Roland announced the conditions. At each exaction, Sir John bowed his head in sign of assent, and merely replied, "Very good."

The one who had taken charge of Sir John's interests attempted to make some objections to a form of combat which must end, unless something impossible to foresee occurred, in the death of both parties; but Sir John begged him to make no difficulties.

"M. de Montrevel is a gallant man," he said. "I do not wish to thwart him in anything; whatever he does is right."

It only remained to settle the hour and place of meeting. On these points Sir John again placed himself at Roland's disposal. The seconds left him even more delighted with this interview than they had been by the first. Roland was expecting them, and they repeated what had taken place.

"I told you how it would be," said Roland.

They asked him to name the time and place. He named seven that evening in the Allée de la Muette; it was the hour when the Bois was almost solitary, but the light was still good enough (the month, it will be remembered, was June) for two adversaries to fight with any weapon.

No one had spoken of the pistols. The young men proposed to get them at an armorer's.

"No," said Roland, "Sir John Tanlay has an excellent pair of duelling pistols which I have already used. If he has no repugnance to fight with those pistols I prefer them to all others."

The young man who was now Sir John's second went to see his client and put to him the following inquiries: whether the time and place suited him, and whether he would allow his pistols to be used.

Sir John answered by regulating his watch to that of his second, and by giving the box of pistols into his hands.

"Shall I call for you, Sir John?" asked the young man.

Sir John smiled sadly.

"Needless," he said; "you are M. de Montrevel's friend, and the drive will be more agreeable to you with him than with me. I shall go on horseback with my servant; you will find me on the ground."

The young officer returned to Roland with this answer.

"What did I tell you?" said the latter.

It was then mid-day; there were still seven hours before them and Roland dismissed his friends to their pleasures or occupations. At half-past six precisely they were to be at his door with three horses and two servants. It was

important, to avoid interference, that the trip should seem like an ordinary ride.

At half-past six precisely the waiter of the hôtel informed Roland that his friends were in the courtyard. Roland gave them an affectionate greeting and sprang into the saddle. The party followed the boulevards until they turned toward the place Louis XV. and went up the Champs-Élysées. On the way the strange phenomenon which had so much surprised Sir John at the time of Roland's duel with Alfred de Barjois recurred, — Roland's gayety might have been thought an affectation were it not so evidently genuine. The seconds were young men with good experience of courage, but even they were bewildered by such indifference. They might have understood it in connection with an ordinary duel, where coolness and dexterity gave the man who possesses them a greater chance over his adversary; but in a combat like this to which they were going neither dexterity nor coolness would avail to save the combatants, if not from death, certainly from some terrible wound.

Moreover Roland pressed his horse like a man in haste, so that he reached one end of the Allée de la Muette five minutes before the hour named.

A man was in the allée; Roland recognized Sir John. The seconds were watching the young man's face as he caught sight of his adversary. To their great astonishment, its only expression was that of almost tender good-will.

The four actors in the scene that was about to take place met. Sir John Tanlay was perfectly calm, but his face wore a look of the deepest sadness. It was evident that this meeting was as grievous to him as it seemed joyous to Roland.

The party dismounted; one of the seconds took the box of pistols from the hands of a servant, whom he ordered, with his companions, to lead the horses away and not to return until they heard the pistol-shots. The principals and the seconds then entered the part of the wood where it

seemed the thickest, and looked about them for a convenient spot. The wood was, as Roland had foreseen, deserted; the approach of the dinner hour had taken every one home.

They found a small cleared space exactly suited to their purpose. The seconds looked at Roland and Sir John. They nodded their heads in sign of approval.

"Is there to be any change?" asked one of the seconds, addressing Sir John.

"Ask M. de Montrevel," replied Sir John. "I am here entirely by his will."

"There is no change," said Roland.

The seconds took the pistols from the box and loaded them. Sir John stood apart, striking the heads of the grasses with his whip.

Presently one of the young men said to Roland, "The pistols are ready."

"Inform Sir John," he replied.

One of the seconds turned and went up to Sir John. The other measured off five paces. Roland saw that the distance was greater than he had thought.

"Pardon me," he said, "I chose three paces."

"Five," said the officer who had measured the distance.

"No, my dear friend, you are wrong."

He turned to Sir John and to his own second as if to question them.

"Three paces will do very well," replied Sir John, bowing.

There was nothing to be said if both adversaries agreed.

The five paces were reduced to three. Then two sabres were laid on the ground to mark the limits. Sir John and Roland took their places, standing so that the toes of their boots touched the sabres. A pistol was then given to each of them.

They bowed to say that they were ready. The seconds stepped aside. They were to give the signal by clapping their hands three times. At the first clap the principals were to cock their pistols; at the second take aim; at the third fire. The three claps were given at equal inter-

vals, amid the deepest silence; the breeze itself seemed to pause, the rustle of the leaves was hushed. The principals were calm; but a visible distress was on the faces of the seconds.

At the third clap the two shots rang out so simultaneously that they seemed only one. But, to the utter astonishment of the seconds, the two combatants remained erect. At the moment of firing Roland had lowered his pistol and fired into the ground. Sir John had raised his and cut the branch of a tree behind Roland three feet above his head. Each was evidently amazed, — amazed that he himself was still living, having spared his adversary.

Roland was the first to speak.

"Ah!" he cried, "my sister said truly you are the most generous man on earth."

Flinging his pistol from him he held out his arms to Sir John, who rushed into them.

"I understand!" he cried. "You wanted to die; but, God be thanked! I am not your murderer."

The seconds came up.

"What does it mean?" they said.

"Nothing," said Roland, "except that I could not die by the hand of the man I love best on earth; you saw for yourselves he preferred to die himself rather than kill me."

Then, throwing himself once more into Sir John's arms, and grasping the hands of his two friends he said: —

"And now we must part; the First Consul is on the eve of a great battle in Italy, and I have not a moment to lose if I would be there."

Leaving Sir John to make what explanations he thought suitable to the seconds, Roland rushed to the roadway, sprang upon his horse, and returned to Paris at a gallop.

XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

During this time the French army continued its march, and on the 5th of June entered Milan.

There was little resistance. The fort of Milan was invested. Murat, sent to Piacenza, had taken the city without striking a blow. Lannes had defeated General Ott at Montebello. Thus disposed, the French were on the rear of the Austrian army before the latter were aware of it.

During the night of the 8th of June a courier arrived from Murat, who, as we have just said, was occupying Piacenza; Murat had intercepted a despatch from General Melas, and now sent it to the First Consul. This despatch announced the capitulation of Genoa; Masséna, after eating horses, dogs, cats, rats, had been forced to surrender. Melas spoke of the Army of the Reserves with the utmost contempt; he declared that the story of Bonaparte's presence in Italy was a hoax; and said he knew for certain that the First Consul was still in Paris.

Here was news that must instantly be made known to Bonaparte, for it came within the category of bad news. Bourrienne therefore woke him up at three in the morning and translated the despatch. The first words Bonaparte said were: —

"Pooh! Bourrienne, you don't understand German."

But Bourrienne repeated the translation word for word. After this second reading the general rose, had everybody waked, gave his orders, and then went back to bed and to sleep himself.

The same day he left Milan and established his headquarters at Stradella; he remained there till June 12th, left

on the 13th, and marched to the Scrivia through Montebello, where he saw the field of battle still bleeding and torn after Lannes' victory. The traces of death were everywhere; the church was overflowing with dead and wounded.

"The devil!" cried the First Consul to the conqueror, "you must have made it pretty hot here!"

"So hot, general, that the bones were cracking and rattling in my division like hail on a skylight."

While the First Consul was at Stradella, June 11th, Desaix had rejoined him. Released by the capitulation of El-Arish, Desaix had reached Toulon May 6, the very day on which Bonaparte left Paris. At the base of the Mont Saint-Bernard, Bonaparte received a letter from him asking if he should start for Paris or rejoin the army.

"Start for Paris, indeed!" exclaimed Bonaparte; "write him to join us in Italy at headquarters, wherever they may be."

Bourrienne wrote, and as we have said, Desaix reached Stradella on the 11th of June. The First Consul received him with a twofold joy: in the first place, he regained a man without ambition, an intelligent officer, a devoted friend; in the second place, Desaix arrived in the nick of time to take command of the division lately under Boudet, who had just been killed. Through a false report received through General Gardanne, the First Consul was led to believe that the enemy refused to give battle and were retiring on Genoa. He sent Desaix and his division on the road to Novi to cut them off.

The night of the 13th passed tranquilly. In spite of a heavy storm on the preceding evening an engagement had taken place in which the Austrians were defeated. It seemed as though nature and men were wearied out, for all was still during the night. Bonaparte was easy in mind; there was but one bridge over the Bormida, and he was confidently assured that that bridge was down. Pickets were stationed as far as possible along the Bormida, each with four scouts.

The whole of that night was employed by the enemy in crossing the river. At two in the morning two parties of scouts were surprised; seven were killed, the eighth made his way back to the pickets, crying out, "To arms!"

Instantly a courier was despatched to the First Consul who was sleeping at Torre di Galifolo. Meanwhile, till orders could be received from headquarters, the drums beat to arms along the whole line. A man must have shared in such a scene as that to form any idea of the effect produced on a sleeping army by the roll of drums calling the soldiers to arms at three in the morning. The bravest shuddered. The troops were lying down all dressed; every man sprang up, ran to the stacked arms, and seized his weapon.

The lines were formed on the vast plain of Marengo. The noise of the drums swept on like a train of lighted powder; in the dim half-light the hasty movements of the pickets could be seen. When the day broke the French troops were stationed as follows: —

The division Gardanne and the division Chamberlhac, forming the extreme advance, were camped about a little country-place called Petra Bona, at the angle formed by the high-road from Marengo to Tortona and the Bormida, which crosses that road on its way to fall into the Tanaro.

The corps of General Lannes was before the village of San-Giuliano, the place which Bonaparte had pointed out upon the map to Roland, three months earlier, telling him that on that spot the fate of the campaign would be decided.

The Consular guard was stationed some two hundred rods or so in the rear of Lannes.

The brigade of cavalry under command of General Kellermann, and a few squadrons of hussars and chasseurs, formed the left, filling up along the advanced line the gap between the divisions of Gardanne and of Chamberlhac.

A second brigade of cavalry, commanded by General Champeaux, formed the right and filled up on the second line the gaps in the cavalry of General Lannes.

And finally, the 12th regiment of hussars, and the 21st regiment of chasseurs, detached by Murat under the orders of General Rivaud, occupied the opening to the Salo valley on the extreme right of the position.

These forces amounted to about twenty-five to twenty-six thousand men, not counting the divisions Monnier and Boudet, ten thousand men in all, commanded by Desaix, and now, as we have said, detached from the main army to cut off the retreat of the enemy to Genoa. Instead of making that retreat, however, the enemy were now attacking.

During the day of June 13th General Melas, commander-in-chief of the Austrian army, having succeeded in re-uniting the troops of Generals Haddich, Kaim, and Ott, crossed the Tanaro, and was now encamped before Alessandria with thirty-six thousand infantry, seven thousand cavalry, and a numerous, well-served, and well-horsed artillery.

At four in the morning firing began on the right and General Victor assigned to all their line of battle. At five Bonaparte was awakened by the sound of cannon. While he was dressing in haste Victor's aide-de-camp rode up to inform him that the enemy had crossed the Bormida and was attacking along the whole line.

The First Consul called for his horse, sprang upon it, and started at a gallop toward the spot where the battle had begun. From the summit of a hill he could overlook the position of both armies.

The enemy was formed in three columns; that on the left, comprising all the cavalry and light infantry, was moving toward Castel-Ceriolo by the Salo road, while the columns of the centre and right, resting upon each other and containing the infantry regiments under Generals Haddich, Kaim, and O'Reilly, and the reserve of grenadiers under command of General Ott, were advancing along the Tortona road and up the Bormida.

The moment they crossed the river, the latter columns came in contact with the troops of General Gardanne, posted, as we have said, at the farm-house and ravine called Petra

Bona; it was the noise of the artillery advancing in this direction that drew Bonaparte to the scene of the battle. He arrived just as Gardanne's division, crushed under the fire of that artillery, was beginning to fall back, and General Victor was sending forward Chamberlhac's division to its support. Protected by this movement, Gardanne's troops retreated in good order and covered the village of Marengo.

The situation was critical; all the plans of the commander-in-chief were overthrown. Instead of attacking, as he was wont to do, with forces judiciously massed, he was attacked himself before he could concentrate his troops. The Austrians, profiting by the lay of the land which opened before them, ceased to march in columns, and deployed in lines parallel to the lines of Gardanne and Chamberlhac, — with this difference, that they were two to our one. The first of these lines was commanded by General Haddich; the second by General Melas; the third by General Ott.

At a very short distance from the Bormida is a stream or rivulet called the Fontanone. This rivulet flows through a deep ravine which forms a half-circle round the village of Marengo and protects it. General Victor had already seen the advantages to be derived from this natural entrenchment, and he used it to rally the divisions of Gardanne and Chamberlhac.

Bonaparte, approving Victor's arrangements, sent him the order to defend Marengo to the last extremity. He himself needed time to devise his game on the great chess-board inclosed between the Bormida, the Fontanone, and Marengo.

His first act was to recall Desaix and his corps, then marching, as we have said, to cut the road to Genoa. Bonaparte sent off two or three aides-de-camp with orders not to stop until they reached that corps. Then he waited, seeing clearly that there was nothing to be done but to fall back in as orderly a manner as possible, until he could gather a compact mass which would enable him not only to stop the retrograde movement, but to take the offensive.

But this waiting was horrible.

Presently the action was renewed along the whole line. The Austrians had reached one bank of the Fontanone, the French held the other; each was firing on the other from the slopes of the ravine; grape-shot flew from side to side within pistol range. Protected by its terrible artillery, the enemy, superior in numbers, had only to spread its lines a little more to overwhelm us.

General Rivaud of Gardanne's division saw the Austrians preparing for this manœuvre. He marched out from the village of Marengo, and placed a battalion in the open country with orders to die there rather than retreat; then while that battalion drew the fire of the enemy's artillery, he formed his cavalry in column, came round the flank of the battalion, fell upon three thousand Austrians advancing to the charge, repulsed them, flung them into disorder, and, all wounded as he was by a splintered ball, forced them back behind their own lines. After which he took a position to the right of the battalion, which had never budged.

But during this time Gardanne's division, which had been struggling with the enemy since early morning, was at last driven back upon Marengo, followed by the first Austrian line, which presently forced Chamberlhac's division to retreat in like manner behind the village. There, an aide-de-camp from Bonaparte ordered the two divisions to rally and retake Marengo at any cost.

General Victor reformed them, put himself at their head, forced his way through the streets, which the Austrians had not had time to barricade, retook the village, lost it again, took it a third time and then, overwhelmed by numbers, lost it a third time.

It was then eleven o'clock; at that hour Desaix, overtaken by the aides-de-camp sent by Bonaparte, ought to be on his way to the battle.

Meantime Lannes with his two divisions came to the help of their struggling comrades. This reinforcement enabled Gardanne and Chamberlhac to reform their lines

parallel to the enemy, who now debouched through Marengo and to the right and also to the left of the village.

The Austrians were about to overwhelm us.

Lannes, forming his centre with the divisions rallied by Victor, deployed with his two least fatigued divisions for the purpose of opposing them to the Austrian wings; the two corps — one excited by a prospect of success, the other fresh from a good rest — flung themselves with fury into the fight, which was now renewed along the whole line.

After struggling one hour, hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, the corps of General Kaim yielded and fell back; General Champeaux, at the head of the 1st and 8th regiments of dragoons, charged upon him, increasing his disorder. General Watrin, with the 6th light infantry and the 22d and 40th of the line, started in pursuit, and drove him nearly five hundred rods beyond the rivulet. But this movement separated the French from their own corps; the centre divisions were endangered by the victory on the right, and Generals Champeaux and Watrin were forced to fall back to the lines they had left uncovered.

At the same moment Kellermann was doing on the left wing what Champeaux and Watrin had done on the right. Two cavalry charges made an opening through the enemy's line; but behind that first line was a second; not daring to go farther forward because of superior numbers, Kellermann lost the fruits of his momentary victory.

It was now mid-day. The French line, which undulated, like a flaming serpent, along a front of nearly three miles, was broken at its centre. That centre, retreating, abandoned the wings. The wings were therefore forced to follow in the retrograde movement. Kellermann to left, Watrin to right, had given their men the order to fall back. The retreat was made in squares under the fire of eighty pieces of artillery which preceded the main body of the Austrian army; the French ranks could be seen to shrink; men were borne to the ambulances by comrades who did not return. One division retreated through a wheat-field; a

shell burst and fired the straw, and two or three thousand men were in the midst of a conflagation; cartridge-boxes caught fire and exploded; fearful disorder reigned in the ranks.

It was then that Bonaparte sent forward the Consular guard. Up they went at a charge, deployed in line of battle, and stopped the progress of the enemy. Meantime the mounted grenadiers dashed forward at a gallop and overthrew the Austrian cavalry.

During this time the division that had come through the burning wheat-field received fresh cartridges and formed in line. But this movement had no other result than to prevent the retreat from becoming a rout.

It was two o'clock.

Bonaparte watched the battle, sitting on the bank of a ditch beside the high-road to Alessandria. He was alone. His left arm was slipped through the bridle of his horse; with the other he was flipping the pebbles in the road with the lash of his whip; cannon-balls were ploughing the earth about him. He seemed indifferent to this great drama, on the issue of which hung all his hopes. Never had he played so terrible a game, — six years of victory against the crown of France!

Suddenly he seemed to issue from his revery; amid the dreadful roar of musketry and cannon, his ear caught the sound of a galloping horse. He raised his head. From the direction of Novi a rider was approaching at full speed, his horse white with foam. As he came within fifty feet Bonaparte gave a cry.

"Roland!" he said.

For all answer the latter cried: —

"Desaix! Desaix! Desaix!"

Bonaparte opened his arms; Roland sprang from his horse and flung himself on the neck of the First Consul.

There were two joys for Bonaparte in this arrival, — that of again seeing a man whom he knew would be devoted to him unto death, and that of the news he brought.

"Then, Desaix?" he questioned.

"Is within three miles; one of your aides met him retracing his steps toward the cannon."

"Three miles!" said Bonaparte; "he may yet be in time."

"How, in time?"

"Look!"

Roland cast his eyes on the battle-field and comprehended the situation.

During the few moments that elapsed while Bonaparte's eyes were removed from it that situation had gone from bad to worse. The first Austrian column, the one which had marched on Castel-Ceriolo and had not as yet been engaged, was about to fall upon our right. If it broke our line the retreat would be flight — Desaix would come too late!

"Take my two last regiments of grenadiers," said Bonaparte; "rally the Consular guard, carry it with you to the extreme right, — you understand? in a square, Roland! — and stop that column like a stone redoubt."

There was not an instant to lose. Roland jumped on his horse, took the two regiments of grenadiers, rallied the Consular guard, and rushed to the right. When he came within fifty feet of General Elsnitz's column he called out: —

"In square! The First Consul is looking at us."

The square formed; each man seemed to root himself in his place.

General Elsnitz, instead of continuing his way to the support of Generals Melas and Kaim, instead of despising the nine hundred men who were nothing to fear at the rear of a victorious army, General Elsnitz paused and turned upon them with fury.

It was a blunder; and that blunder saved the French army.

Those nine hundred men were indeed the stone redoubt that Bonaparte had ordered them to be: artillery, musketry,

bayonets, all were used against them; they yielded not one inch.

Bonaparte was gazing at them with admiration, when, turning his eyes for an instant in the direction of Novi, he saw the gleam of Desaix's bayonets. Standing at a point higher than the plain he could see that which the enemy could not see.

He signed to a group of officers who were collected near him, awaiting orders; behind them were orderlies holding horses. They advanced. Bonaparte pointed to the forest of bayonets now glittering in the sunlight and said to one of the officers: —

"Ride fast to those bayonets and tell them to hasten. As for Desaix, tell him I am waiting for him here."

The officer started at a gallop. Bonaparte again turned his eyes to the battlefield. The retreat continued; but General Elsnitz and his column were stopped by Roland and his nine hundred. The stone redoubt was changed into a volcano; it was belching fire on all four sides. Then Bonaparte, addressing three officers, cried out: —

"One of you to the centre, the other two to the wings! Say everywhere that the reserves are at hand, and we resume the offensive."

The three officers went like arrows from one bow, their ways parting in direct lines to their destination. Bonaparte watched them a few moments, then as he turned round, he saw a rider in general's uniform approaching him.

It was Desaix, — Desaix, whom he had left in Egypt and who that very morning had said, laughing: "The bullets of Europe don't recognize me; some ill-luck will happen."

One grasp of their hands was all the friends needed to reveal their hearts. Then Bonaparte stretched out his arm over the battle-field.

A single look of Desaix's practised eyes told more than all the words in the language. Of the twenty thousand men who began that fight at five in the morning, scarcely more than ten thousand were left in a radius of two miles, — only

nine thousand infantry, one thousand cavalry, and ten pieces of cannon still in a condition for use. One quarter of the army was either dead or wounded; another quarter was employed in removing the wounded, for the First Consul would not suffer them to be abandoned. All these forces, save and excepting Roland and his nine hundred, were retreating.

The vast space between the Bormida and the ground over which the army was now falling back was covered with the dead bodies of men and horses, dismounted cannon, and broken ammunition waggons. Here and there rose columns of smoke and flame from the burning fields of grain.

Desaix took in these details at a glance.

"What do you think of the battle?" asked Bonaparte.

"I think it is lost," said Desaix, "but it is only three o'clock and we have time to win another."

"But," said a voice behind them, "you need cannon."

The voice was that of Marmont, commanding the artillery.

"True, Marmont; but where are we to get them?"

"I have five pieces still intact from the battle-field; we left five more on the Scrivia, and they are just coming up."

"I have brought eight," said Desaix.

"Eighteen!" cried Marmont; "that is all I need."

An aide-de-camp was sent to hasten the arrival of Desaix's guns. His troops were advancing rapidly and were scarcely half a mile from the field. The line of their approach seemed made for the purpose; on the left of the road was a gigantic perpendicular hedge protected by a bank. The infantry was made to file in a narrow line along it; it even hid the cavalry like a curtain.

During this time Marmont had collected his guns and stationed them in battery on the right front of the army. Suddenly they burst forth and vomited upon the Austrians a deluge of grape-shot and canister. For an instant the enemy wavered.

Bonaparte profited by that moment of hesitation to pass along the whole French line.

"Comrades!" he cried, "we've made steps enough backward: remember it is my custom to sleep on the battlefield."

At the same moment, and as if replying to Marmont's cannonade, volleys of musketry burst forth to left, taking the Austrians in flank; it was Desaix and his division coming down upon them at short range and firing across them.

The whole army knew that this was the reserve and that it behooved them to aid it by a supreme effort. "Forward!" rang from left to right. The drums beat the charge. The Austrians, who had not seen the reinforcements, and thinking the day their own were marching with their guns on their shoulders as if at parade, felt that something strange was happening within the French lines; they struggled to retain the victory they now felt slipping from their grasp.

But everywhere the French army resumed the offensive; on all sides the terrible roll of the charge and the victorious Marseillaise were heard above the din; Marmont's battery belched fire; Kellermann rode forward with his cuirassiers and cut through both lines of the enemy.

Desaix jumped ditches, leaped hedges, reached a little eminence, and fell as he turned to see if his division were following him; but his death, instead of diminishing the ardor of his men, redoubled it, and they charged with their bayonets on the column of General Zach.

At that instant Kellermann, who had broken through both lines of the enemy, saw Desaix's division struggling with a compact, immovable mass. He charged in flank, forced his way into a gap, widened it, broke the square, quartered it, and in less than fifteen minutes the five thousand Austrian grenadiers who formed that mass were broken, overthrown, dispersed, crushed, annihilated. They disappeared like smoke. General Zach and his staff, all that were left of them, were taken prisoners.

Then, in turn, the enemy endeavored to make use of its vast cavalry; but the incessant volleys of musketry, the

blasting canister, the terrible bayonet stopped it short. Murat manœuvred on its flanks with two light-battery guns and a howitzer, which dealt death as they galloped on.

For an instant he paused to release Roland and his nine hundred. A shell from the howitzer fell and burst in the Austrian ranks; an opening was made to a gulf of flame. Roland sprang into it, a pistol in one hand, his sabre in the other. The whole Consular guard followed him, opening the enemy's ranks as an iron wedge opens the trunk of an oak. Onward he pressed, till he reached an ammunition waggon surrounded by the masses of the enemy; then without a pause he put his arm, holding a pistol, through the opening of the waggon and fired. A frightful explosion was heard; a volcano had burst its crater and annihilated all around it.

General Elsnitz's corps was in full retreat; the rest of the Austrian army swayed, retreated, broke. The generals tried in vain to stay the torrent and make it a retreat. In thirty minutes the French army traversed the plain it had defended foot by foot for eight hours.

The enemy did not stop until they reached Marengo, where they made a vain attempt to reform under fire of the artillery of Carra-Saint-Cyr (forgotten at Castel-Ceriolo and not recovered till the day was over); but the Desaix, Gardanne, and Chamberlhac divisions, coming up at a run, pursued the flying Austrians through the streets.

Marengo was carried. The enemy retired on Petra Bona, and that too was taken. Then the Austrians rushed toward the bridge of the Bormida; but Carra-Saint-Cyr was there before them. The flying multitudes sought the fords or plunged into the Bormida under fire of our whole line, which did not slacken till ten at night.

The remains of the Austrian army regained their camp at Alessandria; the French army bivouacked near the bridge. The day had cost the Austrians four thousand five hundred dead, six thousand wounded, five thousand prisoners, twelve flags, thirty cannon.

Never did fortune show herself under two such opposite aspects in one day. At two in the afternoon the day was to Bonaparte defeat and its disastrous consequences; at five o'clock it was Italy reconquered and the throne of France in prospect.

That night the First Consul wrote the following letter to Madame de Montrevel: —

MADAME, — I have this day won my greatest victory; but it has cost me the two halves of my heart, Desaix and Roland.

Do not grieve, madame; your son did not care to live, and he could not die more gloriously.

BONAPARTE.

Many useless efforts were made to find the body of the young aide-de-camp: like Romulus he had vanished in a whirlwind.

THE END.